

AN
ESSAY
ON
MUSICAL EXPRESSION.

By CHARLES AVISON,
Organist in Newcastle.

With ALTERATIONS and Large ADDITIONS.

To which is added,
A LETTER to the AUTHOR,
concerning the Music of the ANCIENTS,
and some Passages in CLASSIC WRITERS,
relating to that Subject.

LIKEWISE,
Mr. AVISON's REPLY to the Author of
Remarks on the Essay on MUSICAL EXPRESSION.
In a Letter from Mr. Aviseu, to his Friend in London.

THE THIRD EDITION.

L O N D O N,
Printed for LOCKYER DAVIS, in *Holborn.*
Printer to the ROYAL SOCIETY.
MDCCLXXV.



ADVERTISEMENT.

AS there are several musical terms, which will frequently occur in the course of this Essay, and which are not always sufficiently attended to; it may therefore be necessary, for the sake of those who are not particularly conversant in Music, to explain them according to their most genetal acceptation.

And, first, the term MELODY may be defined the *means* or method of ranging *single* musical sounds in a regular progression, either ascending or descending, according to the established principles.

iv ADVERTISEMENT.

HARMONY is the method of ranging two or more *concording* musical sounds ; or the agreeable *union* of them in several parts, when sung or played together. As therefore a continued succession of *single* musical sounds produces *melody*, so does a continued *combination* of these produce *harmony*.

MODULATION is the effect of *single*, or *concording* musical sounds, succeeding one another in an *arbitrary* but *agreeable* progression, passing from one *key* to another ; and therefore doth as well relate to *combined*, as to *single* musical sounds.

By the word *Key*, is meant, a regular succession of any eight *natural notes* : the lowest note, being considered as the *principal*, is therefore called the *key-note* ; all the

ADVERTISEMENT.

the other notes in that key being subordinate to it.

CADENCES in Music, are the same as stops in speaking or writing; being, in like manner, the proper terminations, either of a part, or of the whole of a composition.

THE term *Subject* (or *Fugue* or *Air*) is, in a musical sense, what the word *Subject* likewise implies in writing. The term *Air*, in some cases, includes the manner of handling or carrying on the subject.

PASSAGES in Music, are also like *Sentences* or *Paragraphs* in writing. This last term hath sometimes been used to denote *Graces*, or *extempore Flourishings* only. But in this latter sense we shall never consider it, the former definition being more
3 strictly

vi ADVERTISEMENT.

strictly just, according to its original ac-
ception, and therefore more applicable to
the intention of this Essay.

MUSIC is said to be in *Score*, when all
the parts are distinctly wrote and set under
each other, so as the eye, at one view,
may take in all the various contrivances of
the composer.

CON.

C O N T E N T S.

P A R T I.

S E C T. I.

O N the Force and Effects of Music
Page 1.

S E C T. II.

On the Analogies between Music and
P A I N T I N G. 18.

P A R T II.

On M U S I C A L C O M P O S I T I O N.

S E C T. I.

On the too close Attachment to Air, and
Neglect of HARMONY. 26.

S E C T.

S E C T. II.

*On the too close Attachment to HARMONY,
and Neglect of AIR.* 38.

S E C T. III.

*On MUSICAL EXPRESSION, so far as it
relates to the COMPOSER.* 49.

P A R T III.

*On MUSICAL EXPRESSION, as it re-
lates to the PERFORMER.*

S E C T. I.

*On the expressive Performance of MUSIC
in general.* 93.

S E C T. II.

*On the expressive PERFORMANCE of
MUSIC in PARTS.* 112.

*Letter to the Author, concerning the MUSIC
of the ANCIENTS.* 135.

*Mr. AVISON'S REPLY to the Author of
Remarks, &c.* 171.

If we view this art in its foundation

man it is of mighty efficacy in working
both on his imagination and his passions.

The force of harmony, or melody alone,
is wonderful in the imagination.

And though the production is no less ravishing
to the ear, than full of sympathy or exultation

MUSICAL EXPRESSION.

The capacity of receiving pleasure
from these musical sounds, is in fact, a

peculiar and internal sense, that of a much
more refined nature than the external

senses: for in the pleasure arising from
our internal sense of harmony, we are

ON THE FORCE AND EFFECTS OF MUSIC.

AS the public inclination for Music
seems every day advancing, it may

not be amiss, at this time, to offer a few
observations on that delightful art; such

observations, I mean, as may be chiefly
applicable to the present times; such as

may tend to correct any errors that have
arisen, either in the composition, or the

practice of music.

B

If

If we view this art in its foundations, we shall find, that by the constitution of man it is of mighty efficacy in working both on his imagination and his passions. The force of *harmony*, or *melody* alone, is wonderful on the imagination. *A full chord* struck, or a beautiful succession of *single sounds* produced, is no less ravishing to the ear, than just symmetry or exquisite colours to the eye.

The capacity of receiving pleasure from these musical sounds, is, in fact, a peculiar and internal sense; but of a much more refined nature than the external senses: for in the pleasures arising from our internal sense of harmony, there is no prior uneasiness necessary, in order to our tasting them in their full perfection; neither is the enjoyment of them attended either with languor or disgust. It is their peculiar and essential property, to divest the soul of every unquiet passion, to pour in upon the mind a silent and serene joy, beyond the power of words to express, and to fix the heart in a
rational,

rational, benevolent, and happy tranquillity.

But, though this be the natural effect of *melody* or *harmony* on the imagination, when simply considered; yet when to these is added the force of *Musical Expression*, the effect is greatly increased; for then they assume the power of exciting all the most agreeable passions of the soul. The force of sound in alarming the passions is prodigious. Thus, the noise of thunder, the shouts of war, the uproar of an enraged ocean, strike us with terror: so again, there are certain sounds natural to joy, others to grief or despondency, others to tenderness and love; and by hearing *these*, we naturally sympathize with those who either *enjoy* or *suffer*. Thus music, either by imitating these various sounds in due subordination to the laws of *air* and *harmony*, or by any other method of association, bringing the objects of our passions before us (especially when those objects are determined, and made as it were visibly and

B 2

intimately

intimately present to the imagination by the help of words) does naturally raise a variety of passions in the human breast, similar to the sounds which are expressed: and thus, by the musician's art, we are often carried into the fury of a battle or a tempest, we are by turns elated with joy, or sunk in pleasing sorrow, roused to courage, or quelled by grateful terrors, melted into pity, tenderness, and love, or transported to the regions of bliss, in an extacy of divine praise.

But beyond this, I think we may venture to assert, that it is the peculiar quality of Music to raise the *sociable and happy passions*, and to *subdue the contrary ones*. I know it has been generally believed and affirmed, that its power extends alike to every affection of the mind. But I would offer it to the consideration of the public, whether this is not a general and fundamental error. I would appeal to any man, whether ever he found himself urged to acts of selfishness, cruelty, treachery, revenge, or malevolence, by
the

MUSICAL EXPRESSION. 5

the power of musical sounds? or if he ever found jealousy, suspicion, or ingratitude engendered in his breast, either from HARMONY or DISCORD? I believe no instance of this nature can be alledged with truth. It must be owned, indeed, that the force of music may urge the *passions* to an excess, or it may fix them on false and improper objects, and may thus be pernicious in its effects: but still the passions which it raises, though they may be *misled* or *excessive*, are of the benevolent and social kind, and in their intent at least are disinterested and noble^a.

As

^a Lest the two passions above-mentioned, of *terror* and *grief*, should be thought an exception to this rule, it may not be improper to remark as to the first, that the *terror* raised by *Musical Expression*, is always of that grateful kind, which arises from an impression of something terrible to the imagination, but which is immediately dissipated, by a subsequent conviction that the danger is entirely imaginary: of the same kind is the terror raised in us, when we stand near the edge of a precipice, or in sight of a tempestuous ocean, or are present at a tragical representation on the stage: in all these cases, as in that of musical expression, the sense of our *security* mixes itself with the terrible impressions, and melts them into a very sensible delight. As to the second instance, that of

As I take this to be the truth of the case, so it seems to me no difficult matter to assign a sufficient reason for it: we have already seen that it is the natural effect of air or harmony to throw the mind into a pleasurable state: and when it hath obtained this state, it will of course exert those powers, and be susceptible of those passions, which are the most natural and agreeable to it. Now these are altogether of the benevolent species; inasmuch as we know that the contrary affections, such as anger, revenge, jealousy, and hatred, are always attended with anxiety and pain: whereas all the various modifications of love, whether human or divine, are but so many kinds of immediate happiness. From this view of things therefore it necessarily follows, that every species of musical sound must tend to dispel the malevolent passions, because they are *painful*; and nourish grief, it will be sufficient to observe, that as it always has something of the social kind for its foundation, so it is often attended with a kind of sensation, which may with truth be called *pleasing*.

those

those which are benevolent, because they are *pleasing*.

The most general and striking instance of the power of Music, perhaps, that we know of, is that related of the *Arcadians* by POLYBIUS, in the fourth book of his history; which, as it expressly coincides with the subject in question, I shall venture to give the reader entire.

This judicious historian, speaking of the cruelties exercised upon the *Cynaethians* by the *Aetolians*, and the little compassion that their neighbours had shewn them; after having described the calamities of this people, abhorred by all *Greece*, adds the following remarks;

“ As the *Arcadians* are esteemed by
 “ the *Greeks*, not only for the gentleness
 “ of their manners, their beneficence and
 “ humanity towards strangers, but also
 “ for their piety to the gods; it may not
 “ be amiss to examine, in few words,
 “ with regard to the ferocity of the *Cyna-*
 “ *ethians*, how it is possible, being incon-
 “ testable *Arcadians* from their origin,
 they

“ they are become so much distinguished
“ by their cruelty, and all manner of
“ crimes, from the other *Greeks* of this
“ time. I believe, it can only be imput-
“ ed to their having been the first and
“ sole people of all the *Arcadians*, who
“ were estranged from the laudable insti-
“ tutions of their ancestors, founded upon
“ the natural wants of all those who in-
“ habit *Arcadia*.

“ The study of Music (I mean that
“ which is worthy the name) has its
“ utility every-where; but it is absolute-
“ ly necessary among the *Arcadians*. For
“ we must not adopt the sentiment of
“ *Ephorus*, who, in the beginning of his
“ writings, advances this proposition un-
“ worthy of him: *that Music is intro-*
“ *duced amongst men, as a kind of in-*
“ *chantment, only to deceive and mislead*
“ *them*. Neither should we imagine that
“ it is without reason, that the ancient
“ people of *Crete* and *Lacedæmon* have
“ preferred the use of soft Music in war,
“ to that of the trumpet; or, that the
“ *Arca-*

“ *Arcadians*, in establishing their republic, although in other respects extremely austere in their manner of living, have shewn to Music so high a regard, that they not only teach this art to their children, but even compel their youth to a study of it to the age of thirty. These facts are notoriously known. It is also known, that the *Arcadians* are almost the only people, among whom their youth, in obedience to the laws, habituate themselves from their infancy, to sing *hymns* and *pæans*, as is usual among them, to the honour of the gods and heroes of their country. They are likewise taught the airs of *Philoxenus* and *Timotheus*; after which, every year, during the feasts of *Bacchus*, this youth are divided into two bands, the one consisting of boys, the other of their young men, who, to the music of flutes, dance in their theatres with great emulation, celebrating those games which take their names from each troop. Even in their assemblies and parties

“ parties of pleasure, the *Arcadians* divert
 “ themselves less in conversation, or re-
 “ lating of stories, than in singing by
 “ turns, and inviting each other reciprocally
 “ to this exercise. It is no disgrace
 “ with them, to own their ignorance of
 “ other arts : but they cannot deny their
 “ ability in singing, because, at all events,
 “ they are necessitated to acquire this ta-
 “ lent ; nor, in confessing their skill, can
 “ they exempt themselves from giving
 “ proofs of it, as that would be deemed
 “ amongst them a particular infamy. Be-
 “ sides this, at the care and expence
 “ of the public, their youth are trained
 “ in dancing and military exercises,
 “ which they perform to the music of
 “ flutes ; and every year give proof of
 “ their abilities in the presence of their
 “ fellow-citizens.

“ Now it seems to me, that the first
 “ legislators, in forming such kind of
 “ establishments, have not had any de-
 “ sign of introducing luxury and effe-
 “ minacy ; but that they have chiefly had

MUSICAL EXPRESSION. II

“ in view the way of living among the
 “ *Arcadians*, which their manual and
 “ toilsome exercises rendered extremely
 “ laborious and severe; and the austere
 “ manners of this people, to which the
 “ coldness and severity of the air in al-
 “ most every part of *Arcadia* did greatly
 “ contribute.

“ For it is natural to partake of the
 “ quality of this element. Thence it is,
 “ that different people, in proportion to
 “ the distance which separates them,
 “ differ from each other, not only in their
 “ exterior form and colour, but also in
 “ their customs and employments. The
 “ legislators, therefore, willing to soften
 “ and temper this ferocity and rugged-
 “ ness of the *Arcadians*, made all those
 “ regulations which I have here men-
 “ tioned; and instituted, besides these, va-
 “ rious assemblies and sacrifices, as well
 “ for the men, as for the women; and
 “ also dances for their children of both
 “ sexes. In a word, they contrived all
 “ kinds of expedients to soften and as-
 “ swage,

“ swage, by this culture of their man-
“ ners, the natural rudeness and barbari-
“ ty of the *Arcadians*.

“ But the *Cynæthians*, who inhabit
“ the most rude and savage parts of *Ar-*
“ *cadia*, having neglected all those helps,
“ of which, on that account, they had so
“ much the more occasion; and being,
“ on the contrary, subject to mutual di-
“ visions and contests; they are, at length,
“ become so fierce and barbarous, that
“ there is not a city in *Greece*, where
“ such frequent and enormous crimes are
“ committed, as in that of *Cynætha*.

“ An instance of the unhappy state of
“ this people, and of the aversion of all
“ the *Arcadians* to their form of go-
“ vernment, is the treatment that was
“ shewn to their deputies which they sent
“ to the *Lacedæmonians* after the horrible
“ massacre in *Cynætha*. In all the towns
“ of *Arcadia* which these deputies en-
“ tered, immediate notice was given by an
“ herald, that they should instantly de-
“ part. But the inhabitants of *Manti-*

“ *nea*,

“*nea*, after the departure of these en-
 “voys, went so far, as to purify themselves
 “by expiatory sacrifices, and to carry the
 “victims round the city and its territories,
 “to purify both the one and the other.

“We have related all these things;
 “first, that other cities may be prevent-
 “ed from censuring in general the cus-
 “toms of the *Arcadians*; or, lest some
 “of the people of *Arcadia* themselves,
 “upon false prejudices, that the study of
 “Music is permitted them only as a su-
 “perfluous amusement, should be pre-
 “vailed upon to neglect this part of their
 “discipline: in the second place, to en-
 “gage the *Cynæthians*, if the gods
 “should permit, to humanize and soften
 “their tempers, by an application to
 “the liberal arts, and especially to Music.
 “For this is the only means, by which,
 “they can ever be dispossessed of that
 “ferocity which they have contracted^b.”

Still

^b See *Dissertation où l'on fait voir, que les merveilleux effets, attribuez à la musique des Anciens, ne prouvent point*

Still farther to confirm what is here advanced on the power of Music in raising the social and nobler passions only, I will transcribe a passage from the celebrated *Baron de MONTESQUIEU*:

This learned and sensible writer, animadverting on the severe institutions of the Ancients in regard to manners, having referred to several authorities among the *Greeks* on this head, particularly to the relation of *POLYBIUS* above quoted; proceeds thus.—“ In the *Greek* republics
 “ the magistrates were extremely em-
 “ barrased. They would not have the
 “ citizens apply themselves to trade, to
 “ agriculture, or to the arts; and yet
 “ they would not have them idle. They
 “ found, therefore, employment for them

point qu'elle fût aussi parfaite que la nôtre. Par M. BURETTE. Memoires de Littérature, tirés des registres de l'Academie Royale des Inscriptions & Belles Lettres, Tom. septieme; whence the above fragment of POLYBIUS is translated.

In the fifth, seventh, and eleventh vols. of the *Holland* edition of this collection, the reader will find several entertaining and curious tracts on the subject of Music:

“ in

"in gymnastic and military exercises;
 "and none else were allowed by their in-
 "stitution. Hence the *Greeks* must be
 "considered as a society of wrestlers and
 "boxers. Now these exercises having a
 "natural tendency to render people har-
 "dy and fierce, there was a necessity for
 "tempering them with others that might
 "soften their manners. For this pur-
 "pose, Music, which influences the mind
 "by means of corporeal organs, was ex-
 "tremely proper. It is a kind of me-
 "dium between the bodily exercises that
 "render men fierce and hardy, and spe-
 "culative sciences that render them un-
 "sociable and sour. It cannot be said
 "that Music inspired virtue, for this
 "would be inconceivable: but it pre-
 "vented the effects of a savage institu-
 "tion, and enabled the soul to have such
 "a share in the education, as it could
 "never have had without the assistance
 "of harmony.

"Let us suppose among ourselves a
 "society of men, so passionately fond of
 "hunting,

" hunting, as to make it their sole em-
 " ployment; these people would doubt-
 " less contract a kind of rusticity and
 " fierceness. But if they happened to
 " receive a taste for Music, we should
 " quickly perceive a sensible difference in
 " their customs and manners. In short,
 " the exercises used by the *Greeks* excited
 " only one kind of passions, viz. fierce-
 " ness, anger, and cruelty. But Music
 " excites them all; it is able to inspire
 " the soul with a sense of pity, lenity,
 " tenderness, and love. Our moral
 " writers, who declaim so vehemently
 " against the stage, sufficiently demon-
 " strate the power of Music over the
 " soul.

" If the society above-mentioned were
 " to have no other Music than that of
 " drums and the sound of the trumpet,
 " would it not be more difficult to accom-
 " plish this end, than by the more melt-
 " ing tones of softer harmony? The
 " Antients were therefore in the right,
 " when under particular circumstances
 " they

“ they preferred one mode to another in
 “ regard to manners.

“ But some will ask, why should
 “ Music be pitched upon preferable to
 “ any other entertainment? It is, because
 “ of all sensible pleasures there is none
 “ that less corrupts the soul.”

The fact the baron speaks of, seems to confirm what is here said on the power of Music: for we see that Music was applied by the *Greeks* to awaken the nobler passions only, such as pity, lenity, tenderness, and love. But should a state apply Music to give a roughness of manners, or inspire the contrary passions of hard-heartedness, anger, and cruelty, it would certainly miss its aim; notwithstanding that the baron seems to suppose the contrary. For he hath not alledged any instance, or any kind of proof in support of his supposition. It is true, as he observes in the second paragraph, that the sound of drums or trumpets would have a different effect from the more

^c Spirit of Laws, vol. I. p. 56.

melting tones of softer harmony: yet still, the passions raised by these martial sounds are of the *social* kind: they may excite courage and contempt of death, but never hatred or cruelty.

S E C T. II.

ON THE ANALOGIES BETWEEN MUSIC AND PAINTING.

FROM this short theory we should now proceed to offer a few observations relating to composition.

But as musical composition is known to very few besides the professors and composers of Music themselves; and as there are several resemblances, or analogies between this art and that of *painting*, which is an art much more obvious in its principles, and therefore more generally known; it may not be amiss to draw out some of the most striking of these analogies; and by this means, in

some

Some degree at least, give the common reader an idea of musical composition.

The chief analogies or resemblances that I have observed between these two noble arts are as follow :

1st, They are both founded in geometry, and have proportion for their subject. And though the undulations of air, which are the immediate cause of sound, be of so subtile a nature, as to escape our examination ; yet the vibrations of musical *strings or chords*, from whence these undulations proceed, are as capable of mensuration, as any of those visible objects about which painting is conversant.

2^{dly}, As the excellence of a picture depends on three circumstances, *design, colouring, and expression* ; so in Music, the perfection of composition arises from *melody, harmony, and expression*. Melody, or air, is the work of invention, and therefore the foundation of the other two, and directly analagous to *design* in painting. Harmony gives beauty and strength to the established melodies, in

the same manner as colouring adds life to a just design. And, in both cases, the expression arises from a combination of the other two, and is no more than a strong and proper application of them to the intended subject ^d.

3dly, As the proper mixture of light and shade (called by the *Italians* *Cbiaro-Oscuro*) has a noble effect in painting, and is, indeed, essential to the composition of a good picture; so the judicious mix-

^d *Melody* thus distinguished as the foundation of a musical composition, and compared to *design* in Painting, hath been thought by some a vague and indeterminate analogy; because *harmony*, rather than *melody*, ought to be esteemed the highest excellence of every musical work: yet, though this be admitted, it may still justly be said, that *melody* is, in reality, the *ground-work*, as it is the *first principle* which engages the composer's attention.

Thus, to strike out a *musical subject*, and to carry it into *various melodies*, may be compared to the *first sketches*, or *out-lines* in a picture; (*this, I conceive, is what the painters call design*); and thence these leading principles may be called the *foundation* of every finished piece in either of the arts.

Therefore, wherever I speak of *harmony*, in the course of this Essay, I do not consider it as the first, but most important circumstance, which adorns, and supports the whole performance.

MUSICAL EXPRESSION. 21

ure of concords and discords is equally essential to a musical composition: as shades are necessary to relieve the eye, which is soon tired and disgusted with a level glare of light; so discords are necessary to relieve the ear, which is otherwise immediately fatiated with a continued and unvaried strain of harmony. We may add (for the sake of those who are in any degree acquainted with the theory of Music) that the *preparations* and *resolutions* of discords, resemble the soft gradations from light to shade, or from shade to light, in Painting.

4thly, As in Painting there are three various degrees of distances established, viz. the *fore-ground*, the *intermediate part*, and the *off-skip*; so in Music there are three different parts strictly similar to these, viz. the *bass* (or *fore-ground*), the *tenor* (or *intermediate*), and the *treble* (or *off-skip*). In consequence of this, a musical composition without its *bass*, is like a landscape without its *fore-ground*; without its *tenor*, it resembles

a landscape deprived of its intermediate part; without its treble, it is analagous to a landscape deprived of its distance, or off-skip. We know how imperfect a picture is, when deprived of any of these parts; and hence we may form a judgement of those who determine on the excellence of any musical composition, without seeing or hearing it in all its parts, and understanding their relation to each other.

5^{thly}, As in Painting, especially in the nobler branches of it, and particularly in history-painting, there is a principal figure, which is most remarkable and conspicuous, and to which all the other figures are referred and subordinate; so, in the greater kinds of musical composition, there is a principal or leading *subject*, or succession of notes, which ought to prevail, and be heard through the whole composition; and to which, both the air and harmony of the other parts ought to be in like manner referred and subordinate.

6^{thly},

6thly, So again, as in painting a groupe of figures, care is to be had, that there be no deficiency in it; but that a certain fulness or roundness be preserved, such as *Titian* beautifully compared to a bunch of grapes; so, in the nobler kinds of musical composition, there are several inferior subjects, which depend on the principal: and here the several subjects (as in painting the figures do) are, as it were, to *sustain* and *support* each other: and it is certain, that if any one of these be taken away from a skillful composition, there will be found a deficiency highly disagreeable to an experienced ear. Yet this does not hinder but there may be perfect composition in two, three, four, or more parts, in the same manner as a groupe may be perfect, though consisting of a smaller or greater number of figures. In both cases, the painter or musician varies his disposition according to the number of parts, or figures, which he includes in his plan.

7thly, As in viewing a picture, you ought to be removed to a certain distance, called the point of sight, at which all its parts are seen in their just proportions; so, in a concert, there is a certain distance, at which the sounds are melted into each other, and the various parts strike the ear in their proper strength and symmetry. To stand close by a bassoon, or double-bass, when you hear a concert, is just as if you should plant your eye close to the fore-ground when you view a picture; or as if, in surveying a spacious edifice, you should place yourself at the foot of a pillar that supports it.

Lastly, The various *styles* in Painting—the grand—the terrible—the graceful—the tender—the passionate—the joyous—have all their respective analogies in Music.—And we may add, in consequence of this, that as the manner of handling differs in Painting, according as the subject varies; so, in Music, there are various instruments suited to the different kinds of musical compositions, and particularly adapted

MUSICAL EXPRESSION. 25

adapted to, and expressive of, its several varieties. Thus, as the rough handling is proper for battles, sieges, and whatever is great or terrible; and, on the contrary, the softer handling, and more finished touches, are expressive of love, tenderness, or beauty: so, in Music, the trumpet, horn, or kettle-drum, are most properly employed on the first of these subjects, the lute or harp on the last. There is a short story in the *TATLER**, which illustrates this analogy very prettily. Several eminent painters are there represented in picture as musicians, with those instruments in their hands which most aptly represent their respective manner in Painting.

* N^o 153.

PART

PART II.

On MUSICAL COMPOSITION.

S E C T. I.

ON THE TOO CLOSE ATTACHMENT TO
AIR, AND NEGLECT OF HARMONY.

THESE observations being premised, for the sake of those who are not particularly conversant in the theory of Music; let us now proceed to consider this art with regard to its composition.

We have already observed, that there are, properly speaking, but three circumstances, on which the worth of any musical composition can depend. These are *melody*, *harmony*, and *expression*. When these three are united in their full excellence, the composition is then perfect: if any of these are wanting or imperfect, the composition is proportionably defective. The chief endeavour, therefore, of the skillful composer, must be “to unite all
“these various sources of beauty in every
“piece;

MUSICAL EXPRESSION. 27

“piece; and never so far regard or
“idolize any one of them, as to despise
“and omit the other two.”

Several examples will hereafter be given of considerable masters, who, through an excessive fondness for one of these, have sacrificed the rest, and have thus fallen short of that perfection and variety, which a correct ear demands.

The first error we shall note is, where the harmony, and consequently the expression, is neglected for the sake of air, or rather an extravagant modulation.

The present fashionable extreme of running all our music into one single part, to the utter neglect of all true harmony, is a defect much more essential than the neglect of modulation only; inasmuch as harmony is the very cement of all musical composition.

As in the work of harmony chiefly, the various contrivances of a good composition are laid out and distinguished, which, with a full and perfect execution in all the parts, produce those noble effects we
often

often find in grand performances: so we may consider the improvement of *air*, as the business of invention and taste.

But, if we may judge from the general turn of our modern Music (I speak not of the *English* only), this due regard, as well to a natural succession of melodies, as to their harmonious accompaniments, seems generally neglected or forgotten. Hence that deluge of unbounded *extravaganzi*, which the unskillful call invention, and which are merely calculated to shew an execution, without either propriety or grace.

In these vague and unmeaning pieces, we often find the bewildered composer, either struggling with the difficulties of an extraneous modulation, or tiring the most consummate patience with a tedious repetition of some jejune thought, imagining he can never do enough, till he has run through every *key* that can be crowded into one *movement*; till, at length, all his force being exhausted, he drops into a dull *close*; where his languid piece seems
rather

rather to expire and yield its last, than conclude with a spirited and well-timed cadence.

These kinds of compositions are greatly defective also in point of harmony, and chiefly in the bass, which is often impertinently airy, or, at best, incapable of giving either spirit or fullness to the treble; in both cases the composer not allotting to the bass, the only part which it ought to bear in the whole construction, viz. the foundation of all the rest.

A musical composition, in this light, may not unaptly be compared to the elevation of a building, where it is easy to discern what are the proportions and ornaments suitable to each degree, or ascent, in the elevation: and where the most common observer would laugh at seeing their order inverted, and the heavy and plain *Tuscan*, crushing down the light and delicate *Ionic*.

Thus they strive, rather to surprize, than please the hearer: and, as it is easier to discern what is excellent in the performance,

formance, than *composition* of Music; so we may account, why many have been more industrious to improve and distinguish themselves in the *practice*, than the *study* of this science.

To this silly vanity we may attribute that strange attachment to certain unmeaning compositions, which many of our fluent performers have professed; their chief ambition being to discover a *swift*, rather than a *judicious* or *graceful* hand. That performers of this taste have so much in their power, is, at once, the misfortune and disgrace of Music: for, whatever merit a composition may have in other respects, yet if, from a due regard to the construction of the harmony and fugues, all the parts be put upon a level, and, by that means, their supreme pride and pleasure of a *tedious solo* be not admitted, it is with them a sufficient reason of condemning the whole.

The generality of our musical virtuosi are too easily led by the opinions of such masters; and, where there is no real discernment,

cernment, prejudice and affectation will soon assume the place of reason. Thus, through the inordinate vanity of a few leading performers, a disproportionate fame hath been the lot of some very indifferent composers, while others, with real merit, have been almost totally unknown.

It may be worth considering, from whence this false taste hath had its rise. And 1st, it may, perhaps, be affirmed with truth, that the false taste, or rather the total want of taste, in those who hear, and who always assume to themselves the privilege of *judging*, hath often produced this low species of Music: for it must be owned, that this kind of composition is apt, above all others, at first hearing, to strike an unskillful ear; and hence the masters have often sacrificed their art to the gross judgement of an indelicate audience.

But 2^{dly}, It hath often had its rise from the composer's bestowing his labour and attention on some trifling and unfruit-

unfruitful subject, which can never allow of an easy and natural harmony to support it. For, however pleasing it may seem in its air, yet if it is not capable of admitting also a pleasing accompaniment, it were much better laid aside, than carried into execution. On this account it is, that many fugues are unsufferably tedious: their barren subjects affording no variety in themselves, are therefore often repeated entire; or transposed, or turned topsy-turvey, insomuch that little else is heard throughout the whole piece ^f.

^f I know it is a received opinion among the *connoisseurs* in Music, that the best *subjects* for *fugues*, or *airs*, are pretty much exhausted; and, perhaps, their observation may be right: nevertheless, the skillful composer will so artfully vary and conduct them, that they will seem not only natural, but also new.

This may be seen by certain particular favourite passages, that are to be found in almost all the compositions of our greatest masters.

I would not be understood to mean here, those slavish imitations of whole movements together, especially of many of CORELLI's, which shew their composers so destitute of all invention, or contrivance, as not to strike out one thought or device, that can justly be called original.

3dly, Another source, and, perhaps, the most general, is that low idea of composition, wherein the subject, or air, is no sooner led off, than it is immediately deserted, for the sake of some strange unexpected flights, which have neither connection with each other, nor the least tendency to any design whatever. This kind of random work is admirably calculated for those who *compose* without *abilities*, or *hear* without *discernment*; and therefore we need not wonder, that so large a share of the Music that hath of late appeared, should fall under this denomination.

How different from the conduct of these superficial adventurers in Music, is that of the able and experienced composer; who, when he hath exerted his fancy on any favourite subject, will reserve his sketch, till at his leisure, and when his judgement is free, he can again and again correct, diminish, or enlarge his plan; so that the whole may appear,

D

though

though severely studied, easy and natural, as if it flowed from his first attempt ^g.

Many extempore thoughts, thrown out in the fire and strength of imagination, have stood this critical review, and filled the happy author with uncommon transport. It is then he gains fresh vigour, and renews his toil, to range and harmonize the various melodies of his piece ^h.

It may be proper now to mention, by way of example on this head, the most noted composers who have erred in the extreme of an unnatural modulation; leaving those of still inferior genius, to

^g — ut sibi quivis
Speret idem; fudet multum, frustra que laboret,
Ausus idem: tantum series juncturaque pollet.

— Such fiction would I raise,
As all might hope to imitate with ease;
Yet while they strive the same success to gain;
Should find their labour, and their hopes are vain:
Such grace can order and connection give.

HOR. *Art. Poet.* ver. 240. FRANCIS.

^h CORELLI employed the greatest part of his life in revising and correcting his works, which the many grand and beautiful contrivances in his harmony may sufficiently evince.

that

that oblivion to which they are deservedly destined.

Of the first and lowest class are, VIVALDI, TESSARINI, ALBERTI, and LOCATELLI, whose compositions, being equally defective in various harmony, and true invention, are only a fit amusement for children; nor indeed for these, if ever they are intended to be led to a just taste in Music.

Under the second class, and rising above these last mentioned in dignity, as they pay somewhat more of regard to the principles of harmony, may be ranked several of our modern composers for the *Opera*. Such are HASSE, PORPORRA, TERRADELLAS, and LAMPUGNIANI. Though I must take the liberty to say, that besides their too little regard to the principles of true harmony, they are often defective in one sense, even with regard to air; I mean, by an endless repetition of their *subject*, by wearing it to rags, and tiring the hearer's patience.

Of the third and highest class of composers, who have run into this extreme of modulation, are VINCI, BONONCINI, ASTORGO, and PERGOLESE. The frequent Delicacy of whose airs, is so striking, that we almost forget the defect of harmony, under which they often labour. Their faults are lost amidst their excellencies; and the critic of taste is almost tempted to blame his own severity, in censuring compositions, in which he finds charms so powerful and commanding.

However, for the sake of truth, it must be added, that this taste, even in its most pardonable degree, ought to be discouraged, because it seems naturally to lead to the ruin of a noble art. We need only compare the present with past ages, and we shall see a like catastrophe in the art of painting. “ For (as an ingenious
“ writer very justly remarks) while the
“ masters in this fine art confined the
“ pencil to the genuine forms of grace
“ and greatness, and only superadded to
“ these, the temperate embellishments of
a chaf

“ a chastised and modest colouring, the
 “ art grew towards its perfection: but
 “ no sooner was their attention turned
 “ from *truth*, *simplicity*, and *design*, than
 “ their credit declined with their art;
 “ and the experienced eye, which con-
 “ templates the old pictures with admira-
 “ tion, surveys the *modern* with indif-
 “ ference or contemptⁱ.”^k

ⁱ *Browne's* Essays on the Characteristics, p. 390.

^k Painting was arrived at the summit of perfection, when Music was far behind, and but slowly advancing, though greatly encouraged and admired. The works of PALESTINA in that infant-state of Music, may be considered as the first lights of harmony: while those of RAPHAEL, his contemporary and fellow-citizen, not only excelled the several eminent masters that went before him, but to this day remain unequalled. Painting, since that period, hath undergone various changes, and is now far short of the pre-eminence, which, perhaps, it once had above its sister-arts. In regard to Music, *that* also, from the time of PALESTINA to the present, hath been subject to a series of alterations, both in its style and method of composition; but if we except the interruption it hath found from a national bad taste in some parts of *Europe*, it seems, upon the whole, rather to have gradually improved.

S E C T. II.

ON THE TOO CLOSE ATTACHMENT TO
HARMONY, AND NEGLECT OF AIR.

HAVING noted the reigning defect of the modern composers, arising from their superficial use of modulation, to the utter neglect of all true harmony; the next thing that offers itself, is the very reverse of this. I mean, the too severe attachment of the Ancients¹ to harmony, and the neglect of modulation. The old masters, in general, discover a great depth of knowledge in the construction of their harmony. Their subjects are invented, and carried on with wonderful art; to which they often add a considerable energy and force of expression: yet, we must own, that with regard to *air* or modulation, they are often defective. Our old cathedral mu-

¹ By the Ancients are meant, those who lived from the time of PALESTINA to the introduction of modern operas,

fic is a sufficient proof of this: here we generally find the more striking beauties of air or modulation, give way to a dry rule of counterpoint: many an elaborate piece, by this means, instead of being solemn, becomes formal; and while our thoughts, by a *natural* and pleasing melody, should be elevated to the proper objects of our devotion, we are only struck with an idea of some *artificial* contrivances in the harmony.

Thus the old Music was often contrived to discover the composer's *art*, as the modern is generally calculated to display the performer's *dexterity*.

The learned *contrapuntist* may exercise his talent in many wonderful contrivances, as in *fugues* and *canons* of various *subjects* and *parts*, &c. But, where the master is thus severely intent in shewing his art, he may, indeed, amuse the *understanding*, and amaze the *eye*, but can never touch the *heart*, or delight the *ear*.

I have often thought that the state of Music, at different times, might, very

appositely, be compared to the series of alterations in the art of building. We cannot, indeed, with the same certainty and precision, determine what may have been the perfection of Music, in its original state, among the Ancients: yet, the short analogy which follows, may serve to evince, that both these arts have varied according to the taste of particular ages.

It is well known, that in old *Greece* and *Rome* architecture was in its highest perfection; and that, after their several empires were overthrown, these glorious monuments of their taste and genius were almost entirely destroyed. To these succeeded a strange mixture of the *antique* and *barbarous* Gusto, which has since been distinguished by the name of Gothic. In these latter ages this art has gradually returned to its former state; and the ancient relish of the grand, the simple, and convenient is revived.

And thus we may distinguish the three great *eras* of Music,

Amongst

MUSICAL EXPRESSION. 41

Amongst the Ancients, the true simplicity of *melody*, with, perhaps, some mixture of plain unperplexed *harmony*, seems to have been that *magic spell*, which so powerfully enchanted every hearer.

At the revival of this art in the time of Pope GREGORY, a new system, and new laws of harmony were invented, and afterwards enlarged by GUIDO ARETINO: but this served only to lead the plodding geniuses of those times (and since, their rigid followers) to incumber the art with a *confusion of parts*, which, like the numerous and trifling ornaments in the *Gothic architecture*, was productive of no other pleasure, than that of wondering at the patience and minuteness of the artist, and which, like *that* too, by men of taste, hath long been exploded ^m.

At present our taste is greatly more diversified, more subjected to the genius

^m In the reign of queen *Elizabeth*, and *James I.*, the musicians were famous for composing lessons, &c. in forty parts. See *Fasti Oxon.* under the articles *Bird* and *Bull*.

and language of particular countries, and less confined by those rigorous laws; the least deviation from which, was formerly thought an unpardonable offence; as if those laws were intended to fix the boundaries of genius, and prevent the advancement of science.

But, as we have said, the art (though still fluctuating) has now gained much freedom and enlargement, from these minute and severe laws, and is returning nearer to its ancient simplicity. The most eminent composers of late years, have not shewn any great *fondness* for a multiplicity of parts, which rather destroy than assist the force and efficacy of Music; neither have they deprived the charms of *melody* of their peculiar province, by stunning the ear with an *harmony* too intricate and multifarious. And, I believe, upon a general survey of the particular genius of different masters, we shall find, that those who have the least of *nature* in their compositions, have generally endeavoured to supply the
want

want of it, by the severer application of art.

Yet, I would by no means be thought to include all the old masters in this censure: some of them have carried musical composition to that height of excellence, that we need think it no disgrace to form our taste of *counterpoint* on the valuable plans they have left us. Numbers of these indeed have fallen, and deservedly, into oblivion; such, I mean, who had only the cold assistance of art, and were destitute of genius. But there are others of this class, who, although the early period in which they wrote, naturally exposed them to the defect here noted; yet the force of their genius, and the wonderful construction of their fugues and harmony, hath excited the admiration of all succeeding ages. And here we shall find, that the composers of this class will naturally fall into three different ranks, in the same manner as those we have already ventured to characterize in the preceding section.

Among these, PALESTINA, the first, not only in point of time ⁿ, but of genius too, deserves the high title of *father of harmony*. And the style of our great old master TALLIS ^o, evidently shews he had studied the works of this great composer, who lived to see his own system of harmony take root, and flourish in many parts of *Europe*; but more especially in *Italy*, where he was immediately succeeded by several eminent masters, among whom, perhaps, ALLEGRI may be esteemed the chief; whose compositions, with those of PALESTINA, are still performed in the Pope's chapel, and other choirs abroad: in all these masters we see the same grand construction of parts, and a parallel *defect* of modulation.

After these we may rank CARISSIMI, STRADELLA ^p, and STEFFANI: authors
of

ⁿ PALESTINA lived at *Rome*, in the time of LEO the Tenth; the period at which all arts revived.

^o TALLIS was chapel-master in *Henry* the Eighth's time.

^p STRADELLA is supposed to have been one of the first composers who introduced the recitative into
vocal

of a much later date, indeed, and who lived also at different times: yet their works, though, in general, of the same character with those of PALESTINA, are not, perhaps, of so high a class in one respect, nor so low in another. I mean, that although their character is that of *excellence in harmony and defect in air*; yet they are not so excellent in the former, nor so defective in the latter, as the venerable PALESTINA.

From the time of these masters to the present, there has been a succession of

vocal compositions. PURCEL, not long after him, aimed at something like that species of music, not then known in *England*: but whether he had any connection with the *Italian* is doubtful. It is certain, however, this excellent master was possessed of all those qualities that are requisite to form a great composer; and, we may venture to say, had the genius of PURCEL been assisted with such an intercourse, as we have had since his time, with the best masters abroad, he might have stood eminent, perhaps, among the greatest.

In his airs there is a mixture of harmony and fancy, that sets him far above the rest of his countrymen. In fine, what COWLEY and WALLER united, may be esteemed among the poets; such may PURCEL be thought among the musicians.

many

many excellent composers, who seeing the defects of those who preceded them, in the too great neglect of *air*, have adorned the noblest harmonies by a suitable *modulation*: yet still, so far retaining the style of the more ancient compositions, as to make the *harmonic construction* the leading character of their works; while the circumstance of modulation remains only as a *secondary* quality. Such are the chaste and faultless CORELLI; the bold and inventive SCARLATTI¹; the sublime CALDARA; the graceful and spirited RAMEAU^r.

To

¹ DOMENICO SCARLATTI, author of some excellent *lessons* for the *harpsichord*, and son to the SCARLATTI here mentioned, may justly be ranked among the great masters of this age. The invention of his *subjects* or *airs*, and the beautiful chain of *modulation* in all these *pieces*, are peculiarly his own: and though in many places, the finest *passages* are greatly disguised with capricious *divisions*, yet, upon the whole, they are original and masterly.

^r We cannot form an adequate idea of the genius of this master from his *concertos* for the *harpsichord* alone, though excellent in their kind; but from his *operas* chiefly, which as yet, I believe, are but little known in *England*.

As

To these we may justly add our illustrious HANDEL; in whose manly style we often find the noblest harmonies; and these enlivened with such a variety of modulation, as could hardly have been expected from one who hath supplied the town with musical entertainments of every kind, for thirty years together^s.

These

As in this species of composition, the undertaking is great and extensive, so the composer's skill or inability will, in proportion, be distinguished.

Hence it is we are instantly charmed with the happy talent of RAMEAU. His *choruses*, *airs*, and *duetts*, are finely adapted to the various subjects they are intended to express. In the first, he is noble and striking: in the latter, cheerful, easy, and flowing; and, when he would sooth, most expressively tender. Besides, among these are interspersed a variety of *dances*, and other *instrumental pieces*, which agreeably relieve the ear from too severe an attention to the *vocal*, and, therefore, render these *operas* of RAMEAU more complete and entertaining, than many others of character that may excel them only in some particular circumstance.

* The celebrated LULLI of *France*, and the old SCARLATTI at *Rome*, may be considered in the same light with HANDEL. They were both voluminous composers, and were not always equally happy in commanding their genius. Yet, upon the whole, they have been of infinite service in the progress of Music: and if we take away from their

numerous

These seem to be the principal authors, worthy the attention of a musical enquirer, who have regarded the *harmonic system* and the construction of fugues as the principal object of their care; while at the same time, they have regarded the circumstance of modulation so far as to deserve a very high degree of praise on this account, though not the highest.

numerous works, all that is indifferent, there will still enough remain that is excellent, to give them a distinguished rank.

It is pretty remarkable, that the three masters here mentioned, have, perhaps, enjoyed the highest local reputation, having all been the reigning favourites among the people, in the several countries where they resided: and thence have been regarded as standing models of perfection to many succeeding composers.

The *Italians* seem particularly indebted to the variety and invention of SCARLATTI; and *France* has produced a RAMEAU, equal, if not superior to LULLI. The *English*, as yet, indeed, have not been so successful: but whether this may be owing to any inferiority in the original they have chose to imitate, or to a want of genius in those that are his imitators (in distinguishing, perhaps, not the most excellent of his works) it is not necessary here to determine.

S E C T. III.

ON MUSICAL EXPRESSION, SO FAR AS IT
RELATES TO THE COMPOSER.

SO much concerning the two branches of music, *air* and *harmony*: let us now consider the third circumstance, which is *expression*. This, as hath been already observed, “arises from a combination of “the other two; and is no other than a “strong and proper application of them “to the intended subject.”

From this definition it will plainly appear, that air and harmony are never to be deserted for the sake of expression: because expression is founded on them. And if we should attempt any thing in defiance of these, it would cease to be *Musical Expression*. Still less can the horrid dissonance of cat-calls deserve this appellation, though the expression or imitation be ever so strong and natural.

And, as dissonance and shocking sounds cannot be called *Musical Expression*;

so neither do I think, can mere imitation of several other things be entitled to this name, which, however, among the generality of mankind, hath often obtained it. Thus the gradual rising or falling of the notes in a long succession, is often used to denote ascent or descent; broken intervals, to denote an interrupted motion; a number of quick divisions, to describe swiftness or flying; sounds resembling laughter, to describe laughter; with a number of other contrivances of a parallel kind, which it is needless here to mention. Now all these I should chuse to style imitation, rather than expression; because it seems to me, that their tendency is rather to fix the hearer's attention on the similitude between the sounds and the things which they describe, and thereby to excite a reflex act of the understanding, than to affect the heart and raise the passions of the soul.

Here then we see a defect or impropriety, similar to those which have been above observed to arise from a too particular

MUSICAL EXPRESSION. 51

cular attachment either to the *modulation* or *harmony*. For as, in the first case, the master often attaches himself so strongly to the beauty of *air* or modulation, as to neglect the *harmony*; and in the second case, pursues his harmony or fugues so as to destroy the beauty of modulation; so in this third case, for the sake of a forced, and (if I may so speak) an unmeaning imitation, he neglects both air and harmony, on which alone true musical expression can be founded.

This distinction seems more worthy our notice at present, because some very eminent composers have attached themselves chiefly to the method here mentioned; and seem to think they have exhausted all the depths of expression, by a dextrous imitation of the meaning of a few particular words, that occur in the hymns or songs which they set to music. Thus, were one of these gentlemen to express the following words of *Milton*,

E 2

Their

— Their songs

Divide the night, and *lift* our thoughts
to heav'n :

It is highly probable, that upon the word *divide*, he would run a *division* of half a dozen bars ; and on the subsequent part of the sentence, he would not think he had done the poet justice, or *risen* to that *height* of sublimity which he ought to express, till he had climbed up to the very top of his instrument, or at least as far as a human voice could follow him. And this would pass with a great part of mankind for musical expression ; instead of that noble mixture of solemn airs and various harmony, which *indeed* elevates our thoughts, and gives that exquisite pleasure, which none but true lovers of harmony can feel.

Were it necessary, I might easily prove, upon general principles, that what I now advance concerning musical imitation is strictly just ; both, because Music as an imitative art has *very confined powers*, and because, when it is an ally to
poetry

poetry (which it ought always to be when it exerts its mimetic faculty) it obtains its end *by raising correspondent affections* in the soul with those which ought to result from the genius of the poem. But this has been already shewn, by a judicious writer^t, with that precision and accuracy which distinguishes his writings. To his excellent treatise I shall, therefore, refer my reader, and content myself, in this place, with adding two or three practical observations by way of corollary to his theory.

1st, As *Music* passing to the mind through the organ of the ear, can imitate only *by* "sounds and motions", it seems reasonable, that when *sounds* only are the objects of imitation, the composer ought to throw the mimetic part entirely amongst the accompanying *instruments*; because it is probable, that the imitation will be too powerful in the *voice* which ought to

^t Vide three treatises of J. H. the second concerning poetry, painting, and music.

^u Vide page 57 in the above treatise.

be engaged in *expression* alone; or, in other words, in raising correspondent affections with the part ^x. Indeed, in some cases, expression will coincide with imitation, and may then be admitted universally: as in such *chromatic strains* as are mimetic of the grief and anguish of the human voice ^y. But to the imitation of sounds in the *natural* or *inanimate* world ^z,

^x I cannot bring a finer illustration of my meaning, than from the old song in *Acis and Galatea*.

Hush, ye pretty warbling Quire;
Your thrilling strains
Awake my pains,
And kindle soft desire, &c.

Here the great composer has very judiciously employed the vocal part in the nobler office of expressing, with pathos, the plaintive turn of the words, while the symphony and accompaniment very cheerfully imitate the singing of *the warbling quire*. But had Mr. HANDEL admitted this *imitation of sound* into the vocal part, and made it imitate the *thrilling strains of the birds by warbling divisions*, it is manifest the expression would have been much injured; whereas, according to his management of it, the *imitation* greatly assists the expression.

^y As, to take Mr H's own example, the chorus of Baal's Priests in Deborah. *Doleful tidings, how ye wound!*

^z Such as the noise of animals, the roar of thunder, ocean, &c. The murmur of streams.

this,

this, I believe, may be applied as a general rule.

2dly, When Music imitates *motions*, the rythm, and cast of the air, will generally require, that both the vocal and instrumental parts coincide in their imitation. But then, be it observed, that the composer ought always to be more cautious and reserved when he applies this faculty of Music to *motion*, than when he applies it to sound: and the reason is obvious; the intervals in Music are not so strictly similar to animate or inanimate motions, as its tones are to animate or inanimate sounds. Notes ascending or descending by large intervals, are not so like the stalking of a Giant^a, as a flow of even notes are

^a Mr H. has himself quoted a passage in *Acis and Galatea*, "See what ample strides he takes," as imitative of the walk of *Polypheme*; but, I apprehend, the majesty of that air rather affected him by an *association of ideas*, than any great similarity in the imitation.

An association of this kind, seems to have struck the author of the *Parallele des Italiens et des François en ce qui regarde la musique*: "Pour la conformité" (says he) de l'air, avec le sens des paroles, je n'ay "jamais rien entendu, en matière de symphonies,

are to the murmuring of a stream^b; and little jiggish flurrs are less like the nod of

“ de comparable à celle qui fut exécutée à Rome, à
 “ l’oratoire de S. Jérôme de la charité, le jour de
 “ la Saint Martin de l’année 1697, sur ces deux
 “ mots, *mille saette, mille flèches*: c’étoit un air dont
 “ les notes étoient pointées à la manière des gigue;
 “ le caractère de cet air imprimoit si vivement dans
 “ l’ame l’idée de fleche: et la force de cette idée
 “ séduisoit tellement l’imagination, que chaque
 “ violon paroissoit être un arc; & tous les archets,
 “ autant de flèches décochées, dont les pointes sem-
 “ bloient darder la symphonie de toutes parts; on
 “ ne sauroit entendre rien de plus ingénieux & de
 “ plus heureusement exprimé.”

We may learn from this, how far *musical imitation*, simply considered, may amuse the fancy of many who are less susceptible of the more delicate and refined beauties of *expression*.—The particular felicity of the *Frenchman*, in the musical performance here described, seems to have depended on this similitude, *viz.* that every *violin* appeared as a *bow*, and all the *bows*, like so many *arrows shot off*, the *points* of which, seemed to *dart* the symphony through all its parts. Perhaps, so far as *imitation* was necessary, his observation might be just. But were this an argument, that the business of *imitation* was superior to every other in musical composition, it would reduce the noblest species of it, still lower than the *extravaganzi* of the instrumental performances which we have noted in the chapter on modulation,

^b Here let me quote with pleasure, the air which Mr HANDEL has adapted to those charming words of MILTON;

Hide

of *Alexander*^c, than certain shakes and
trills

Hide me from day's garish eye,
While the bee, with honied thigh,
At her flow'ry work does sing,
And the waters murmuring;
With such concert as they keep,
Entice the dewy-feather'd sleep.
And let some strange mysterious dream,
Wave at his wings in airy stream
Of lively portraiture display'd,
Softly on my eyelids laid.
Then, as I wake, sweet music breathe,
Above, about, and underneath;
Sent by some spirit, to mortals good,
Or th' unseen genius of the wood.

Here the air and the symphony delightfully imitate the humming of the bees, the murmuring of the waters, and express the ideas of quiet and slumber; but what, above all, demands this eulogium, is the master-stroke of accompanying the voice with trebles and tenors, only till he comes to these words,

"Then, as I wake, sweet music, breathe,"
where *the bass* begins with an effect that can be felt only, and not expressed.

I have chosen to give all my illustrations on this matter from the works of Mr HANDEL, because no one has exercised this talent more universally, and because these instances must also be most universally understood.

^c With ravish'd ears,
The monarch hears,
Assumes the god,
Affects to nod,
And seems to shake the spheres.

In

trills are to the voice of the nightingale^d.

3dly, As Music can only imitate motions and sounds, and the *motions* only imperfectly; it will follow, that musical imitation ought never to be employed in representing objects, of which motion or sound are not the principal constituents. Thus, to light, or lightning, we annex the property of celerity of motion; yet it will not follow from thence, that an extremely swift progression of notes will raise the idea of either one or the other; because, as we said, the imitation must be, in these cases, very partial^e. Again, it is one property of frost to make persons shake and tremble; yet, a tremulous

In which air I am sorry to observe, that the *affectation* of imitating this nod, has reduced the music as much below the dignity of the words, as *Alexander's* nod was beneath that of *Homer's Jupiter*.

^d Vide il Penseroso.

Sweet bird, that shuns the noise of folly,
Most musical, most melancholy.

^e What shall we say to excuse this same great composer, who, in his Oratorio of *Joshua*, condescended to amuse the vulgar part of his audience, by letting them *bear the sun stand still*?

movement of semitones, will never give the true idea of frost: though, perhaps, they may of a trembling person.

4thly, As the aim of Music is to affect the passions in a pleasing manner, and as it uses melody and harmony to obtain that end, its imitation must never be employed on *ungraceful motions*, or *disagreeable sounds*: because, in the one case, it must injure the *melody* of the air; and in the other, the *harmony* of the accompaniment; and, in both cases, must lose its intent of affecting the passions *pleasingly*.

5thly, As imitation is only so far of use in Music, as when it aids the expression; as it is only analogous to poetic imitation, *when poetry imitates* through mere natural media^f, so it should only be employed in the same manner. To make the sound echo to the sense in descriptive lyric, and, perhaps, in the cooler parts of epic poetry, is often a great beauty; but, should the tragic poet labour at shewing this art

^f *HP's Treatises*, p. 70.

in his most distressful speeches; I suppose he would rather flatten than inspirit his drama: in like manner, the musical composer, who catches at every particular [§] epithet or metaphor that the part affords him, to shew his imitative power, will never fail to hurt the true aim of his composition, and will always prove the more deficient in proportion as his author is more pathetic or sublime,

What then is the composer, who would aim at true musical expression, to perform? I answer, he is to blend such an happy mixture of air and harmony, as will affect us most strongly with the passions or affections which the poet intends to raise: and that, on this account, he is not principally to dwell on particular words in the way of imitation, but to comprehend the poet's general drift or intention, and on this to form his airs and harmony,

§ To give but one instance, how many composers hath the single epithet, *WARBLING*, misled from the true road of expression, like an *ignis fatuus*, and bemixed them in a *pun*?

either

either by imitation (so far as imitation may be proper to this end) or by any other means. But this I must still add, that if he attempts to raise the passions by imitation, it must be such a temperate and chastised imitation as rather brings the object before the hearer, than such a one as induces him to form a comparison between the object and the sound: for, in this last case, his attention will be turned entirely on the composer's art, which must effectually check the passion. The power of Music is, in this respect, parallel to the power of Eloquence: if it works at all, it must work in a secret and unsuspected manner. In either case, a pompous display of art will destroy its own intentions: on which account, one of the best general rules, perhaps, that can be given for musical expression, is that which gives rise to the pathetic in every other art, *an unaffected strain of nature and simplicity*^h.

There

^h Whatever the state of music may have been among the ancient *Greeks*, &c. or whether it was actually

There is no doubt but many rules may be deduced, both from the compositions of

actually capable of producing those wonderful effects related of it, we cannot absolutely determine; seeing all the uses of their *enharmonic scale* are totally lost; and of their musical characters, which should have conveyed to us their art, slender traces any where to be found. From the structure of their instruments, we cannot form any vast ideas of their powers: * they seem to have been far inferior to those in use at present: but which, indeed, being capable of as much execution as expression, are only rendered more liable to be abused. Thus, the too great compass of our modern instruments, tempting as well the composer as performer, to exceed the natural bounds of harmony, may be one reason why some authors have so warmly espoused the cause of the ancient Music, and run down that of the modern †.

I believe we may justly conclude, that the force and beauties of the ancient Music did not consist so much in artful compositions, or in any superiority of execution in the performance: as in the pure simplicity of its melody; which being performed in unisons, by their vast choruses of voices and instruments, no wonder the most prodigious effects were produced ‡. Since the time of GUIDO ARETINO §, the laws and principles of harmony have been considerably enlarged, and, by rendering this art more intricate and complex, have deprived it of

* CALMET's Dissertation sur la Musique des Anciens.

† Sir WILLIAM TEMPLE's Works, 1st vol. fol. p. 161.

‡ BONET, Histoire de la Musique.

§ ARETINO lived in the eleventh century.

of the best masters, and from experience, in observing the effects which various sounds have upon the imagination and affections. And I don't know, whether the same propriety, in regard to the part of expression in *poetry*, may not as well be applied to *musical expression*; since there are discordant and harmonious inflections of musical sounds when united, and various modes or keys (besides the various instruments themselves), which,

those plain, though striking beauties, which, probably, almost every hearer could distinguish and admire. And I don't know whether this will not go some way, towards determining the dispute concerning the superior excellency of ancient and modern Music. It is to be observed, that the Ancients, when they speak of its marvellous effects, generally consider it as an adjunct to poetry. Now an art, in its progress to its own absolute perfection, may arrive at some intermediate point; which is its point of perfection, considered as an art joined to another art; but not to its own, when taken separately. If the Ancients, therefore, carried melody to its highest perfection, it is probable they pushed the musical art as far as it would go, considered as an adjunct to poetry: but harmony is the perfection of Music, as a single science. Hence then we may determine the specific difference between the ancient and modern compositions, and consequently their excellency.

like

like particular words, or sentences in writing, are very expressive of the different passions, which are so powerfully excited by the numbers of poetry ⁱ.

Thus the *sharp* or *flat* key; slow or lively movements; the *staccato*; the *soste*.

ⁱ “ Soft is the strain when *Zephyr* gently blows,
 “ And the smooth stream in smoother numbers flows:
 “ But when loud surges lash the sounding shore,
 “ The hoarse, rough verse should like the torrent roar,
 “ When *Ajax* strives some rock’s vast weight to throw,
 “ The line too labours, and the words move slow;
 “ Not so, when swift *Camilla* scours the plain,
 “ Flies o’er the unbending corn, and skims along the
 “ main.

“ Hear how *Timotheus* vary’d lays surprize,
 “ And bid alternate passions fall and rise!
 “ While, at each change, the son of *Libyan Jove*,
 “ Now burns with glory, and then melts with love:
 “ Now his fierce eyes with sparkling fury glow,
 “ Now sighs steal out, and tears begin to flow:
 “ *Persians* and *Greeks* like turns of nature found,
 “ And the world’s victor stood subdu’d by sound!
 “ The power of Music all our hearts allow;
 “ And what *Timotheus* was, is *Dryden* now.”

ESSAY ON CRITICISM.

Perhaps, the powers of passion and verse were never so happily exerted, for the purpose of Music, as in this ode: and as happily hath the *genius* of the *composer* * been united with *that* of the poet.

* Alexander’s Feast, set to music by G. F. Handel.

MUSICAL EXPRESSION. 65

nute, or smooth-drawn bow; the striking *diefs*^k; all the variety of intervals, from a semitone to a tenth, &c; the various mixtures of harmonies, the preparation of discords, and their resolution into concords, the sweet succession of melodies; and several other circumstances besides these, do all tend to give that variety of expression which elevates the soul to joy or courage, melts it into tenderness or pity, fixes it in a rational serenity, or raises it to the raptures of devotion.

When we consider the fulness of harmony, and variety of air, which may be included in the art of composing *fugues*, we may pronounce this species of composition, of all others, the most noble

^k Or *quarter tone*, or less, if performed by the voice or violin, being an interval in the *enharmonic scale* of the Ancients, and amazingly powerful in rousing the passions.

This interval is equally capable, in judicious hands, of exciting terror, grief, despondency, or the contrary passions, in their extremes; and the very wide difference, in this case, is chiefly produced from their different accompaniments, and the particular modulations in which they are employed.

F

and

and diffusive; and which, like history-painting, does not only contain the chief excellencies of all the other species, but is likewise capable of admitting many other beauties of a superior nature. But here, in the term *fugue*, I do not include alone, those confined compositions, which proceed by regular answers, according to the stated laws of modulation, but chiefly, such as admit of a variety of subjects, particularly for voices and instruments united; and which, with their *imitations*, *reverses*, and other relative passages, are conducted throughout the whole, in subordination to their *principal*; and, as the lesser beauties or decorations in poetry are subservient to the fable of a tragedy, or heroic poem, so are these different, though kindred airs, in the same movement, in like manner, subservient to some one principal design; and productive of all the grandeur, beauty, and propriety, that can be expected from the most extensive plan in the whole range of musical composition.

By

MUSICAL EXPRESSION. 67

By a diversity of harmonies, the chain and progression of melodies is also finely supported; and thence, a greater variety of expression will be found in the construction of full Music. In this case, the composer hath the advantage of throwing his tender and delicate passages into the *solo*, or those of a bolder expression into the *chorus*; and as there are oftentimes a kind of *neutral* airs, if I may so call them, which, by the performer's art, may be made expressive of very different passions; or, as the same words, by a change in their accent, convey a different sense; so this musical expression may be varied in such a manner, that the same passage, which has been heard alone, if repeated, may also be formed into *chorus*; and *è contra*, the *chorus* into *solo*. In like manner may be disposed the *forte* and *piano*.

We may also here remark, that in ranging different movements, in the same *concerto*, or in other suites of different airs, the confined order of keeping, in

the sequel of these, to one or two *keys*, at most, produces but an irksome monotony of sounds: for it is not sufficient, that different movements are of different species; their changes should also appear, as well in their *keys*, as in their *air*: and the composer of taste will shew his art in the arrangement of these *different pieces*, as well as in his variety of modulation, or other contrivances, in the *same piece*¹.

And,

¹ Such are the beautiful *cantatas* of BATTISTA PERGOLESE, printed at *Naples* in the year 1738. They are, perhaps, the most elegant performances, in this species of composition, that have yet appeared.

The *cantatas* of GIOVANNI BONONCINI, published in *London*, by subscription, above thirty years ago, are also very fine, and may still be called modern: though many performers, who hear and see no farther than the most perishable part of a composition, have given them up to an exploded taste: nevertheless, I shall venture to say, that the *airs* of BONONCINI are natural, and the *accompanied recitative* masterly, and finely imagined in their progression to the *tempo-giusto*, or regular movement. I don't know any method of accompaniment with the voice, more delicate and affecting than this, in which the *Italians*, especially the two great masters here noted, are peculiarly happy.

PORPORA'S

And, as *discords*, when judiciously managed, give their succeeding *concord*s a yet more pleasing harmony ; in like manner some happy contrivance in changing the key of separate movements, whether from *flat* to *sharp*, or *vice versa*, will still, in a higher degree, afford relief and pleasure to the hearer : many alterations of this kind may surely be affected without the least disagreeable surprize ; since we are not always delighted when the modulation follows, as we naturally expect it, nor always shocked when *that* expectation is disappointed.

Thus, by contrivances of this nature, we are charmed with an agreeable variety,

PORPORA'S *cantatas* deserve also a particular mention in this place. The most agreeable changes in modulation, from one movement to another, may be found in many of these, his master-pieces. The *adagios* are generally, indeed, too much lengthened ; by which means, they are rather tedious when repeated from the *Da Capo* : and, notwithstanding I have thought the subjects in them pleasing, and have heard them very finely performed ; yet could I never be convinced, that their author had learned the art of knowing when he had done enough.

and which, perhaps, equally to the most striking *air*, commands the admiration of many lovers of Music, who yet can no otherwise account for the preference they may give to a fine composition, than purely from the pleasure it affords them. In fine, it is this masterly taste and method of ranging, in beautiful order, the distinguished parts of a composition, which gives the highest delight to those who can enter into the real merits of this art:—a circumstance, the musical student would do well to consider, before he engages in any trial of his talent that way. But, as example is of much greater force than any rule or precept whatever; I would recommend to him, a constant perusal of the best compositions in *score*, where he will find all the information he can desire on this head ^m.

After

^m The musical student being here supposed to have some previous knowledge in the rudiments of harmony, it might not be amiss, before he attempts the more finished parts, to take a particular survey of RAMEAU'S *Principles of Composition*, now translated into *English*; for, however prevailing a good ear may

After all that has been, or can be said, the energy and grace of *musical expression* is of too delicate a nature to be fixed by words: it is a matter of taste, rather than of reasoning, and is, therefore, much better understood by example than by precept. It is in the works of the great masters, that we must look for the rules and full union of *air*, *harmony*, and *expression*. Would modern composers condescend to repair to these fountains of knowledge, the public ear would neither be offended nor misled by those shallow and unconnected compositions, which have of late so much abounded, especially those insipid efforts that are

may be found in the practice of composition, yet the rules of this art, as in all other arts, are founded in nature, and, therefore, must afford great assistance, even to those who may think but slightly of them. As the works of art without genius, though masterly, and studied in their construction, are often defective of spirit and taste; so are those of genius without art, very far from perfection: but when these are united, when the powers of nature, and the researches of art, are fully exerted, it is then only we may expect the noblest productions.

daily made to set to Music that flood of nonsense which is let in upon us since the commencement of our summer entertainments, and which, in the manner they are conducted, cannot possibly prove of any advantage to Music: trifling essays in poetry must depress, instead of raising, the genius of the composer; who vainly attempts, instead of giving aid to sense (Music's noble prerogative), to harmonize nonsense, and make dulness pleasing.

Thus, it fares with Music, as it fares with her sister Poetry; for it must be owned, that the compositions last mentioned, are generally upon a level with the words they are set to: their fate too is generally the same; these *insect* productions seldom out-living the *season* that gives them birth.

It has been justly enough alledgedⁿ, with regard to the *Italian* operas, that there are also many improprieties in these, which offend even the most common ob-

ⁿ Tosi on the florid Song, p. 91.

server; particularly that egregious absurdity of repeating, and finishing many songs with the first part; when it often happens, after the passions of anger and revenge have been sufficiently expressed, that reconciliation and love are the subjects of the second, and, therefore, should conclude the performance. But, as if it were unnatural to leave the mind in this tranquil state, the performer, or actor, must relapse into all that tempest and fury with which he began, and leave his hearers in the midst of it.

I have just hinted this unaccountable conduct of the *Italian* composers, by way of contrast to a conduct as remarkably ridiculous in our own; I mean, our manner of setting one single trifling air, repeated to many verses, and all of them, perhaps, expressive of very different sentiments or affections; than which, a greater absurdity cannot possibly be imagined, in the construction of any musical composition whatsoever.

What may farther be observed in the composition of these little airs, is the general method of repeating the same thought in the *Ritornello*, which is heard in the song. By this means, the burthen of the tune, be it ever so common, must incessantly jingle in the ear, and produce nothing but some wretched alternations between the instrument and voice.

On the contrary, if the subject of the song was relieved by different passages in the instrumental part, but of a similar air with the vocal; this kind of variety might support the repetition of the whole, with somewhat more spirit.

Among the many excellent ballads which our language affords, I shall mention that of *Black-ey'd Susan*, wrote by Mr GAY; and propose it as a specimen, to shew by what methods a composer might handle this genus of the lyric poem: and which, indeed, is no other than to treat them, as the *Italians* have generally managed those little love-stories which are the subject of their *serenatas*:
a kind

—a kind of musical production, extremely elegant, and proper for this purpose. Therefore, I would recommend to our vocal composers, some such method of setting to music the best *English* songs, and which, in like manner, will admit of various *airs* and *duetts*, with their *recitative*, or musical narratives, properly interspersed, to relieve and embellish the whole.

Thus one good ballad may supply a fruitful genius with a variety of incidents, wherein he will have sufficient scope to display his imagination, and to shew a judgement and contrivance in adapting his several *airs* to the different subjects of the poetry. By this means, not only a genteel and consistent performance might be produced, but also fewer good masters would lavish their musical thoughts on subjects so far beneath them: nor, on this account, would there be any dearth of those agreeable and familiar *airs*, which might properly be calculated for those entertainments, where
the

the public ear should be always consulted; and of which I have so good an opinion, that, were this difference between a just or false taste but fairly submitted to its decision, I should not dispute, but the composition which was most natural and pleasing, would bid fairest for the general approbation.

Yet, so long as our composers prosecute their studies without the least knowledge of any works but such as are on a level with their own, they must never expect to advance in the esteem of their judges. For, as the striking beauties in a fine composition, elevate and enliven the fancy; so is it depressed and vitiated by too great a familiarity with whatever is mean and trifling.

He, therefore, that is blessed with happy talents for this art, let him shun all the means of catching the common air, which so strangely infects and possesses too many composers; but, unless he has the virtue of the *bee*, who,

“—With

“ — With taste so subtly true,
 “ From pois’nous herbs extracts the healing
 “ dew ;”

I fear, he must banish himself from almost every place of public resort, and fly, perhaps, to monasteries and cells, where the genuine charms of harmony may often, indeed, be found, for stores to grace his future productions.

Our church music is equally capable of improvements from the same sources of taste and knowledge. We seem, at present, almost to have forgot, that devotion is the original and proper end of it. Hence that ill-timed levity of air in our modern anthems, that foolish pride of execution in our voluntaries, which disgusts every rational hearer, and dissipates, instead of heightening, true devotion.

If our organist is a lover of poetry, without which, we may dispute his love for Music ; or indeed, if he has any well-directed passions at all ; he cannot but feel some elevation of mind, when he hears the psalm preceding his voluntary, pronounced

nounced in an awful and pathetic strain: it is then he must join *his* part, and with some solemn air, relieve, with religious chearfulness, the calm and well-disposed heart. Yet, if he feels not this divine energy in his own breast, it will prove but a fruitless attempt to raise it in that of others: nor can he hope to throw out those happy instantaneous thoughts, which sometimes far exceed the best-concerted compositions, and which the enraptured performer would often gladly secure to his future use and pleasure, did they not as fleetly escape as they arise. He should also be extremely cautious of imitating common songs or airs, in the subjects of this latter kind of performance; otherwise he will but too much expose religion to contempt and ridicule.

It may not derogate from our subject of church-music, just to mention the present method of singing the common psalm tunes in the parochial service, which are every where sung without the least regard to *time* or *measure*, by
drawing

drawling out every note to an unlimited length. It is evident, that both the *common* and *proper tunes* were originally intended to be sung in the *alla-breve* time, or the regular pointing of two, three, or four *minims* in a *bar*:—a kind of movement, which every ear, with the least practice, may easily attain: nor when they are sung in parts, should there be any more than three, *i. e.* one treble, tenor, and bass; as too complex an *harmony* would destroy their natural *air*. And, in this style, our psalm tunes are capable of all the solemnity that can be required from such plain and unadorned harmony°.

Whoever

° The pious and ingenious Dr. WATTS, in his preface to his translation of the Psalms, very justly laments this miserable drawling out the Psalm. His remarks on this head so aptly coincide with the subject in question, that I shall here transcribe them.

“ It were to be wished, that all congregations and private families would sing as they do in foreign Protestant churches, without reading line by line.—

“ It were to be wished also, that we might not dwell

“ so long upon every single note, and produce the

“ syllables to such a tiresome extent, with a constant

“ uniformity of time; which disgraces the Music,

“ and puts the congregation quite out of breath;

“ whereas,

Whoever has heard the Protestant congregations abroad sing, in parts, their psalms or hymns, may recollect, with some pleasure, that part of their religious worship; and their exceeding us so far in a performance of this kind, is chiefly owing to the exact *measure* in which those tunes are sung, and not to their *harmony*: for the greatest part of our own, which were composed soon after the Reformation, by those excellent masters we had at that time, would doubtless be found, as well in regard to their solemn *air*, as *harmony*, equal, if not superior, to any compositions of their kind. And we may further observe, that *air* is, in a higher degree, productive of both solemnity and chearfulness, than *harmony*: for there is a dignity and grace in the

“ whereas, if the METHOD of SINGING were but
 “ reformed to a greater speed of pronunciation, we
 “ might often enjoy the pleasure of a longer psalm,
 “ with less expence of time and breath; and our
 “ Psalmody would be more agreeable to that of the
 “ ancient churches, more intelligible to others, and
 “ more delightful to ourselves.”

former,

former, when invented by genius, which a masterly harmony may indeed assist, but can never produce.

However trifling it may appear to consider this species of Music, I cannot but own, that I have been uncommonly affected with hearing some thousands of voices hymning the Deity in a style of harmony adapted to that awful occasion. But sorry I am to observe, that the chief performer, in this kind of noble chorus, is too often so fond of his own conceits; that, with his absurd graces, and tedious and ill-connected interludes, he misleads or confounds his congregation, instead of being the rational guide and director of the whole.

It may be thought, perhaps, by thus depriving our organist of this public opportunity of shewing his dexterity, both in his voluntary and psalm tune, that all performers indiscriminately might be capable of doing the duty here required: but it will be found no such easy matter to strike out the true sublimity of style,

G

which

which is proper to be heard, when the mind is in a devout state; or, when we would be greatly solemn, to avoid the heavy and spiritless manner, which, instead of calmly relieving and lifting up the heart, rather sinks it into a state of deprivation.

We might soon arrive at a very different style and manner, as well in our compositions as performance; did we but study the works of the best chapel-masters abroad, as CALDARA, LOTTI, GASPARINI, and many others, whose excellent compositions ought surely to be better known, and rescued from the possession of those churlish virtuosi, whose unsociable delight is to engross to themselves those performances, which, in justice to their authors, as well as the world, they ought freely to communicate^P.

We

^P The *Motetts* of CALDARA, are noble, pathetic, and finely adapted to the purposes here mentioned. LOTTI and GASPARINI have also composed various pieces for the service of the church. But, as only the fame of them hath, as yet, reached me, I can only suppose them of a character, equal at least

We may clearly discern the effects of such a commerce as is here proposed, with the works of the greatest masters. The immortal works of CORELLI are in the hands of every one; and accordingly we find, that from him many of our best modern composers have generally deduced their elements of harmony. Yet there remains something more to be done by our present professors: they ought to be

to their other compositions, the perusal of which have often afforded me a very singular pleasure.

There is a composition for the church, which the connoisseurs, acquainted with its beauties, esteem as inimitable in its way; namely, the *Stabat Mater*, &c. of the Baron D'ASTORGA. This nobleman had many excellencies, as a composer, and chiefly a simplicity of harmony, and an affecting style in many of his *airs*-and *duets*, which, undoubtedly, he has thrown, in some peculiar manner, into the performance here mentioned.

If ever I have the felicity of seeing this work, I shall expect to find it more equally conducted than the *Stabat Mater* of PERGOLESE. For, though it is the distinguished character of this latter composer, to have succeeded in the *complaining, or sorrowful style*; yet I have often thought there was wanting, in several movements of his *Stabat Mater*, the just distinction, which ought always to be observed, between the tenderness or passion of a theatrical scene, and the solemnity of devotion.

as intimately conversant with those other great masters, who, since CORELLI's time, have added both taste and invention; and, by uniting these, have still come nearer to the perfection of the *general-harmonic composition*.

The numerous seminaries in *Italy* seldom fail of producing a succession of good masters: from these we might select such pieces as would greatly contribute to the real solemnity of the cathedral service. While others again, of a different kind, might be compiled and fitted for concertos, or other musical purposes; so that there would never be wanting a variety of examples and subjects, for the practice of all students in harmony whatever: and, by an assiduous application to a greater and more comprehensive style than we have hitherto attempted, we should soon be able to acquire so true a taste, as would lay a sure foundation for the forming our own masters⁹.

If

⁹ The *Italians* are allowed to excel all other nations in the arts of Painting and Music, but the reason

If it should be asked, who are the proper persons to begin a reform in our church-music? It may be answered, the organists of cathedrals, who are, or ought to be, our *Maestri di Capella*, and by whom, under the influence and protection of their deans, much might be done to the advancement of their choirs: nor would they find any difficulty in accomplishing this useful design, as there are many precedents to direct them, both from Dr. ALDRIDGE and others, who have introduced into their service the celebrated PALESTINA and CARISSIMI with great success. And if this method, when so little good Music was to be had, hath been

son is more obvious in the former than latter; for the recourse to the *antique*, which *Italy* afforded to painting, must be the chief cause of its excellence in that art. Music could have no such external assistance. The Goths had rooted out all tracks of the ancient melody. How then must we account for the superior genius, which the *Italians* have, since that time, discovered in regard to Music? Not from the chimerical hypothesis of air, climate, food, &c. but from the public and national care, which has ever attended it in that country, so different from the treatment it meets with in *England*.

found to advance the dignity and reputation of our cathedral service; how much more may be expected at this time, from the number and variety of those excellent compositions that have since appeared; and which may be easily procured, and adapted to the purposes here mentioned!

An improvement of this kind might be still more easily set on foot, were there any history of the lives and works of the best composers; together with an account of their several *schools*, and the *characteristic taste*, and *manner* of each: — a subject, though yet untouched, of such extensive use, that we may reasonably hope it will be the employment of some future writer.

Painting has long had an advantage of this kind; but whether it has profited by such advantage, may at present, perhaps, be disputed. However, I think, if both these arts are not now in the state of perfection which one might wish, it ought not to be attributed to the want of
genii,

genii, but to the want of proper encouragement, from able and generous patrons, which would excite them to more laudable pursuits; many professors in both the sciences having alike employed their talents in the lowest branches of their art, and turned their views rather to *instant profit*, than to *future fame*.*

Thus,

* In reflecting on the state of Music in *England*, I have often thought, that it might not be altogether foreign to the design of some periodical memoir of literature, to have an article sometimes, giving an account and character of the best musical compositions.

As a precedent, I shall here take the liberty to consider a late performance in such a cursory manner, as may, perhaps, be proper enough on the publication of other musical works hereafter.

" *La Musique raisonnée &c. par Mr. le Compt St. Germain*, published by *Walsh*, pr. 1*l.* 1*s.* This collection of airs, in the opera style, are most of them set for a *Soprano*, some few for the *Conter-Alto*, and accompanied with violins, &c. in four parts.

" In these pieces the author has shewn a peculiar genius in the tender and complaining style, but which require a performer, like himself, to do them justice: this single species of musical expression seems to run through the whole collection, for, though he often aims to express different passions, yet there is still wanting a sufficient va-

Thus, and thus alone, can we hope to reach any tolerable degree of excellence in the nobler kinds of musical composition. The works of the greatest masters are the only schools where we may *see*, and from whence we may *draw*, perfection. And here, that I may do justice to what I think the most distinguished merit, I shall mention, as examples of true *musical expression*, two great authors, the one admirable in *vocal*, the other in *instrumental* Music.

The first of these is BENEDETTO MARCELLO, whose inimitable freedom,

"riety to keep up the attention, when more than
 "one of these airs are performed at a time. Never-
 "theless, when they are intermixed with other per-
 "formances in the concert, they have then, in a
 "particular manner, a very pleasing effect."

Some general idea like this, of our musical essays, on their first appearance, would not only incite a spirit of emulation among the composers, and render their works more worthy the public notice; but might also prove a more effectual restraint to the publishers, not to be so careless and dilatory on their part: for however inadvertent our composers may be, in putting their works incorrect out of their hands, their printers are seldom behind them in that point.

depth,

depth, and comprehensive style, will ever remain the highest example to all composers for the church: for the service of which, he published at *Venice*, near thirty years ago, the first fifty psalms set to Music^s. Here he has far excelled all the Moderns, and given us the truest idea of that noble simplicity which probably was the grand characteristic of the ancient Music. In this extensive and laborious undertaking, like the divine subject he works upon, he is generally either grand, beautiful, or pathetic; and so perfectly free from every thing that is low and common, that the judicious hearer is charmed with an endless variety of new

^s This work is contained in eight volumes in folio. The first four were published in the year 1724. And the whole came out complete two years after, under the following title, *Estro Poetico Armonico, Parafrasi sopra Salmi, Poesia di GIROLAMO ASCANIO GIUSTINIANI, Musica di BENEDETTO MARCELLO Patrizi Veniti, Venezia, 1726*. There are some pieces of instrumental Music published in *London*, and said to be composed by BENEDETTO MARCELLO, a *Venetian* nobleman; but as these are very mean performances, they cannot be supposed to come from the same great author.

and

and pleasing modulation; together with a design and expression so finely adapted, that the sense and harmony do every where coincide. In the last psalm, which is the fifty-first in our version, he seems to have collected all the powers of his vast genius, that he might surpass the wonders he had done before.

I do not mean to affirm, that in this extensive work, every recitative, air, or chorus, is of equal excellence. A continued elevation of this kind, no author ever came up to. Nay, if we consider that variety which in all arts is necessary to keep alive attention, we may, perhaps, affirm with truth, that *inequality* makes a part of the character of excellence: that something ought to be thrown into shades, in order to make the lights more striking. And, in this respect, MARCELLO is truly excellent: if ever he seems to *fall*, it is only to *rise* with more astonishing majesty and greatness.

To

— Far the greatest part
Of what some call neglect, is study'd art,

When

To this illustrious example in *vocal*, I shall add another, the greatest in *instrumental Music*; I mean the admirable GEMINIANI; whose elegance and spirit of composition ought to have been much more our pattern; and from whom the public taste might have received the highest improvement, had we thought proper to lay hold of those opportunities which his long residence in this kingdom has given us.

The public is greatly indebted to this gentleman, not only for his many excellent compositions, but for having as yet parted with none that are not extremely correct and fine. There is such a gentleness and delicacy in the turn of his musical phrase (if I may so call it), and such a natural connection in his expressive and sweet modulation throughout all his works, which are every where sup-

When *Virgil* seems to trifle in a line,
'Tis like a warning-piece which gives the sign,
To wake your fancy and prepare your sight,
To reach the noble height of some unusual flight.

ROSCOM. *Ess. on translated verse.*

ported

ported with so perfect a harmony, that we can never too often hear, or too much admire them. There are no impertinent digressions, no tiresome, unnecessary repetitions; but, from the beginning to the close of his movement, all is natural and pleasing. This it is properly to discourse in Music, when our attention is kept up from one passage to another, so as the ear and the mind may be equally delighted.

From an academy formed under such a *genius*, what a supreme excellence of *taste* might be expected^u!

PART

^u To shew on what foundation this improvement in the musical science may be rested, I will take the liberty to add the following remarks, from two unquestionable authorities on this head,

The first is from my Lord SHAFTESBURY, in his *letter concerning design*.

“ I can, myself, remember the time, when, in
 “ respect of Music, our reigning taste was, in many
 “ degrees, inferior to the *French*. The long reign
 “ of luxury and pleasure under king *Charles* the
 “ Second, and the foreign helps and studied ad-
 “ vantages given to Music in a following reign,
 “ could not raise our genius the least in this respect,
 “ But when the spirit of the nation was grown
 “ more free, though engaged at that time in the
 “ fiercest war, and with the most doubtful success,

“ we

PART III.

ON MUSICAL EXPRESSION, AS IT
RELATES TO THE PERFORMER.

SECT. I.

ON THE EXPRESSIVE PERFORMANCE OF
MUSIC IN GENERAL.

BUT as the nature and effects of
Musical Expression do likewise relate
to the *performer*, and the different instru-
ments

“ we no sooner began to turn ourselves towards
“ Music, and enquire what *Italy* in particular pro-
“ duced, than, in an instant, we out-stripped our
“ neighbours the *French*, entered into a genius far
“ beyond theirs, and raised ourselves an ear and
“ judgement, not inferior to the best now in the
“ world.”

And now, to observe with what improper regard
this art has since been treated, we need only advert
to the next remark from GEMINIANI's *Introduction*
to a good *Taste in Music*.

“ When I came first to *London*, which was thirty-
“ four years ago, I found Music in so thriving a
“ state, that I had all the reason imaginable to sup-
“ pose the growth would be suitable to the excel-
“ lency of the soil. But I have lived to be most
“ misera-

ments which are employed in the practice of Music, so these in their turn may be also considered.

For, as *Musical Expression* in the *composer*, is succeeding in the attempt to express some particular passion^{*}; so in the *performer*, it is to do a *composition* justice, by playing it in a *taste* and *style* so exactly

“ miserably disappointed; for, though it cannot be
 “ said that there was any want of encouragement,
 “ that encouragement was ill bestowed. The hand
 “ was more considered than the head; the perfor-
 “ mance than the composition; and hence it fol-
 “ lowed, that, instead of labouring to cultivate a
 “ taste, which seemed to be all that was wanting,
 “ the public was content to nourish insipidity.”

This great master's first arrival amongst us seems to have been much about that time, which the noble author above-mentioned hath fixed for the most flourishing state of Music, and his sentiments herein, I dare say, will appear reasonable and fair to every impartial judge of the subject before us; especially, as he hath done us the justice to assert, that Music, by proper culture and encouragement, may be brought to as great perfection in *England*, as in any other nation.

* The word *passion* is here taken in the most extensive sense, as it may be applied to every species of excellence in musical compositions; which, from the very design of the composer, demands an *energetic* execution.

corresponding with the intention of the composer, as to preserve and illustrate *all* the beauties of his work.

Again, as the *composer* is culpable, who, for the sake of some low and trifling *imitation*, deserts the beauties of *expression*: so, that *performer* is still more culpable, who is industrious to reduce a good instrument to the state of a bad one, by endeavouring to make it subservient to a still more trifling *mimickry*.

Such are all imitations of *flageolets*, *borns*, *bagpipes*, &c. on the violin; a kind of low device, calculated merely to amaze, and which, even with the common ear, cannot long prevail over the natural love of harmony ^y.

Even

^y The singing of a *cuckoo*, and the cackling of a hen, have, in fact, been often introduced into musical performances. VIVALDI, in his seasons, or concertos, so called, has imitated the barking of a dog; besides many other strange contrivances; attempting even to describe, as well as imitate, the various changes of the elements.

If those composers, who take such pleasure in their musical imitations of the noise of animals, will shew their ingenuity in that way, I would advise them

Even the use of double stops on this instrument may, in my opinion, be considered as one of the abuses of it; since, in the hands of the greatest masters, they only deaden the tone, spoil the expression, and obstruct the execution. In a

them rather to follow the much more effectual method of introducing the creatures themselves. And, by way of example, I shall give them the following story, as it is related by Mr. BAYLE, in his Critical Dictionary, under the article of LEWIS XI. "The
" Abbot DE BAIGNE, a man of great wit, had in-
" vented many things relating to musical instru-
" ments; and, being in the service of the king, was
" once commanded by him to procure him harmo-
" nious sounds from the cries of hogs, imagining
" the thing was absolutely impossible. The Abbot
" was not in the least perplexed at such a command,
" but asked the king money to perform it; which
" was immediately delivered to him, and he effected
" the most surprizing and remarkable thing that
" was ever heard. He got together a large quantity
" of hogs, all of different ages, and put them into
" a tent or pavillion covered with velvet, before
" which tent there was a wooden table all painted;
" and he made an organical instrument with a cer-
" tain number of stops so contrived, that, when he
" hit upon those stops, it answered to some spikes,
" which, pricking the hogs that stood behind in a
" due order, made them cry in such a harmonious
" manner, that the king and all his attendants were
" highly delighted with it."

word,

word, they baffle the performer's art, and bring down *one good instrument* to the state of *two indifferent ones*.

But surely it ought chiefly to be the composer's care, not to give the performer any opportunities whatever of disparaging his art: and the more he avoids all such low buffoonry, the more will this false taste be discouraged: for whatever may be alledged against the depravity of our taste in the musical science, it certainly can be fixed no where so properly, as on the masters themselves; since, were they to persist with any spirit or resolution in the exercise of their genius in such compositions only as are worthy of them, they would undoubtedly improve the public ear, and acquire to themselves a reputation and character worth preserving^z.

Let

^z There is one circumstance, that might tend greatly to the repute and utility of Music; which is, that the professors themselves would cultivate a sincere and friendly cominmerce with each other, and cherish that benevolent temper, which their daily employ, one should think, ought naturally to inspire. In truth, there is nothing enlarges the mind

Let every composer, whether for the church, the theatre, or chamber, thoroughly consider the nature and compass of the voices, or instruments, that are employed in his work; and, by that means, he will the more easily avoid the common error of not sufficiently distinguishing what stile or manner is proper for execution, and what for expression.

He should also minutely observe the different qualities of the instruments themselves: for, as vocal Music requires one kind of expression, and instrumental another; so different instruments have also a different expression peculiar to them.

Thus, the *hautboy* will best express the *cantabile*, or singing stile, and may be used in all movements whatever under

to every social and laudable purpose, so much as this delightful intercourse with harmony. They who feel not this divine effect, are strangers to its noblest influence: for whatever pretensions they may otherwise have to a relish or knowledge of its laws, without this criterion of the musical soul, all other pretended signatures of genius we may look upon as counterfeit.

this

this denomination; especially those movements which tend to the *gay* and *cheerful*.

In compositions for the *German* flute, is required the same method of proceeding by *conjoint degrees*, or such other natural intervals, as, with the nature of its tone, will best express the languishing, or melancholy style. With both these instruments, the running into *extreme keys*, the use of the *staccato*, or distinct separation of notes; and all irregular leaps, or broken and uneven intervals, must be avoided; for which reason alone, these instruments ought never to be employed in the *repieno* parts of concertos for violins, but in such pieces only as are composed for them; and these, perhaps, would be most agreeably introduced as principal instruments in some intervening movements in the concerto, which might not only give a pleasing variety, but shew their different expression to the greatest advantage.

In continued compositions, particularly for the *German* flute, our composers have been not a little unsuccessful; but whe-

ther this failure may be imputed to the deficiency of the instrument, or their attempting to exceed its natural expression, may, perhaps, be worth the composer's while to consider.

The *bassoon* should also have those gradual movements which naturally glide in their divisions, and have the easiest transitions from one key to another; and may be admitted as a *principal* in the *solo*, or *rinforzo* in the *chorus*, but never in the latter without a sufficient number of other basses to qualify and support it ^a.

The *trumpet* and *French-horn*, though equally limited in their *scale*, yet have pieces of very different styles adapted to them. The one, perhaps, to animate and inspire courage; the other to enliven and cheer the spirits; yet are not both to be

^a See the sixth of GEMINIANI'S Concertos, *opera settima*, where there is one movement composed expressly for the bassoon; the agreeable effect of which, may be sufficient to evince how much better this method is of introducing wind-instruments, than admitting them throughout the concerto.

MUSICAL EXPRESSION. 101

alike discarded in the *figurate descant*, or that part of composition where discords are concerned. In this species of harmony I have known the French-horn introduced with amazing success; but it requires a very able composer to manage it properly with such accompaniments. Either of these instruments, when fully accompanied, produce more wonderful effects than when heard alone, because in all martial compositions, their airs and expression are of so plain and unmixed a nature, that their harmony is more easily comprehended; and thence they strike the common ear with a greater degree of pleasure and admiration than any other instrument whatever.

The *organ* and *harpsichord*, though alike in so many respects, that the same performer may equally shew his skill and execution on both; yet are their respective compositions and manner of performance widely different: the former expressing the grand or solemn stile, the

latter, those lively or trickling movements which thrill in the ear.

Now, where any of the above instruments over-rule in concert, whether in the chorus, or solo; or are appointed to play such airs or movements as they cannot easily express; we may then conclude, that the composer hath unfortunately set out upon a wrong principle, which capital error will destroy every good effect that might have been found in his work, had he duly considered the distinct limits and properties of each instrument.

In classing the different instruments in concert, we may consider them as the various stops which complete a good organ: and as the skillful artist so contrives, that, when the full organ is heard, no *mixtures*, or *furnitures*, &c. shall predominate, but that the *diapasons*, with their *octaves*^b, may unite and fill the whole; so we may rank the *violins* with their *basses* and *double-basses*, as the *diapasons* and

^b Principals and flutes.

principals of the concert: for in fact they may be said to contain the very strength and spirit of all harmony; and have in them, not only the expression of all the other instruments, but contain a prodigious variety of many other noble properties peculiar to themselves, of which all the rest are utterly destitute. It is their remarkable distinction, that no concert can be formed without them, as they unite and agree as well with every instrument, as with each other, and return every advantage they receive. And, as the finest *instrumental Music* may be considered as an imitation of the *vocal*; so do these instruments, with their expressive tone and the minutest changes they are capable of in the progression of melody, shew their nearest approaches to the perfection of the human voice.

Let the lover of Music call to mind the delightful effects they afford, when joined with the organ to a chorus of good voices, particularly in churches where the expansion is large and ample, to soften

every rough and grating sound, and unite the variety of voices and other instruments, that complete this grand and solemn performance; he will, even in this ideal enjoyment of Music, with pleasure own and prefer their harmonious expression.

In fine, it is in those productions only which include the violin and its species, where an extensive genius may rove at large through all the various kinds of musical expression; and may give the best performers, though not in capricious and extravagant flights, every desirable opportunity of shewing their skill.

As a remarkable instance of the power of expression in a performance on this instrument, I cannot omit the mention of three masters, within my own knowledge. KNERLER, with great execution and a fine tone, but unsusceptible of the powers of expression, always disappointed the expecting ear: CARBONEL, with but a common portion of those qualities so requisite to enforce an expression, by a natural and
instant

instant feeling of the tender strokes in a fine composition, never failed to give all the pleasure that could be expected from them. But if we would hear these various qualities united in their full perfection, we must repair to the admired GIARDINI. The brilliancy and Fullness of his tone, the sweetness, spirit, and variety of his expression, his amazing rapidity of execution, and exuberance of fancy, joined with the most perfect ease and gracefulness in the performance, concur to set him at the head of his ^c profession.

^c Since the appearance of this great performer, the Signiors PLA, PASSARINI, and CHABRAN, have also excited the admiration of the town: yet, after all, it is but too general an observation (and I cannot help repeating it) that even the greatest performers, when left to themselves, cannot resist the vanity of amazing the multitude.

For this reason, the judicious hearer will always prefer their accompaniment in vocal performances, where every kind of unmeaning execution must give way to a more natural harmony; and their happier talents are employed, in assisting the voice, through all the various beauties of *true* musical expression.

Thus, the judicious performer, by this exertion of his *fort* or master-style, may possibly give a pleasing tenderness or spirit, even to an indifferent composition; while, on the other hand, a neglect, or ignorance, of the use of this art, however expert in other respects the performer may be, will disguise, if not intirely destroy, those distinguished beauties, which alone can raise the dignity and perfection of Music.

I dare say the reader will anticipate the similar case I am about to mention in regard to *reading*; as it will naturally occur to him, on this head, how commanding the power of expression may be found, from a different manner of reading the same author; especially in poetry, where a just and spirited emphasis is so highly essential to point out those interesting strokes, which are more peculiarly designed to delight the imagination and affect the heart. But how infinitely short of this design, is the best-wrote poem, whether we hear it rehearsed with wild
and

and vehement accents, or repeated in a cold and lifeless *monotone*! In either of these cases, our disgust, or weariness of attention, will be found in proportion to the beauties of the author so abused. And just thus it fares with an injudicious performance of a fine musical composition.

The different species of Music, for the church, the theatre, or the chamber, are, or should be, distinguished by their peculiar expression. It may easily be perceived, that it is not the *time* or *measure*, so much as *manner* and *expression*, which stamps the real character of the piece. A well-wrought *allegro*, or any other quick movement for the church, cannot, with propriety, be adapted to theatrical purposes; nor can the *adagio* of this latter kind, strictly speaking, be introduced into the former: I have known several experiments of this nature attempted, but never with success. For, the same pieces which may justly enough be thought very solemn in the theatre, to an experienced

rienced ear, will be found too light and trivial, when they are performed in the church: and this, I may venture to assert, would be the case, though we had never heard them but in some anthem, or other divine performance: and were, therefore, not subject to the prejudice, which their being heard in an opera might occasion ^d.

It is also by this efficacy of musical expression, that a good ear doth ascertain the various terms which are generally made use of to direct the performer. For instance, the words *andante*, *presto*, *allegro*, &c. are differently applied in the different kinds of Music above-mentioned: for, the same terms which denote *lively* and *gay*, in the opera, or concert style, may be understood in the practice

^d “ By the *ancients*, *airs* were sung in three different manners; for the theatre, the style was lively and various; for the chamber, delicate and finished; for the church, moving and grave. This difference, to very many *moderns*, is quite unknown *.”

* See Tosi on the florid song, p. 92.

of church-music, as, *cheerful* and *serene*, or, if the reader pleases, less lively and gay: wherefore, the *allegro*, &c. in this kind of composition, should always be performed somewhat slower than is usual in concertos or operas.

By this observation we may learn, that these words do not always convey what they import in their strict sense, but are to be considered as relative terms; and if they cannot fully answer the composer's intention of communicating, to every performer, the nature of each particular style; yet, are they more proper than any other for that purpose: however, the composer will always be subject to a necessity of leaving great latitude to the performer; who, nevertheless, may be greatly assisted therein, by his perception of the powers of expression.

In vocal Music he can never fail; because, if the different passions which the poet intends to raise, are justly distinguished and expressed by the composer's art; the sensible performer will feel this happy union

union of both the arts, and thence join his own to perfect the whole.

With regard to the instrumental kind; the *style* and *air* of the *movement* must chiefly determine the exact *time* and *manner*, in which it ought to be performed: and unless we strictly attend to this distinction, the most excellent compositions may be greatly injured, especially when the composer is not present, either to lead, or give the *air* of his piece.

I might conclude this head with an observation or two on the several *graces* or ornaments of expression: but as these are already enumerated, and sufficiently explained in the rules of GEMINIANI, I need only refer to that work. However, we may here remark, that, were these elements of playing in taste, with their distinct characters and explanations, become the general standard, as well for the performance of masters, as for the instruction of their pupils; the former, I believe, would not only find them capable of heightening the very best compositions,
but

but the latter would also, with greater facility, arrive at perfection. But, instead of this, the generality of our masters, following each their own method, have preferred a more loose and florid manner of gracing, by which the finest harmonies are too often destroyed; and in their explanation of these graces, by so many different marks, and crowds of little notes, impossible to be expressed, have rather perplexed the learner, who, finding the same art so variously taught, hath, therefore, been often discouraged in the progress of his study.

And, as we have distinguished this master, as a pattern of excellence in his *compositions*, so we must allow him to have been equally excellent in his *performance*; for, in this respect, he was also peculiarly happy in his various expression, as well of the *tender*, the *serene*, the *solemn*, as of the *joyous* and *rapid*; and, with a ready and proper execution, always entered into a true feeling of the spirit, or softness, suitable to each of these

styles :

styles: and, notwithstanding the uncertain duration of this talent, a circumstance common to every performer, he will ever live in those rules above referred to, and in his *Art of playing on the Violin*; in which useful work he has communicated to the musical world, as much of his superior taste and method of execution, as could possibly be expected from such an undertaking.

S E C T. II.

ON THE EXPRESSIVE PERFORMANCES OF MUSIC IN PARTS.

HAVING said so much with regard to the expressive performance of Music in general, I shall now conclude with a few hints which may be of service in the performance of full Music: especially of such *concertos* as have pretty near an equal share of *air* and *expression* in all their parts.

The

The first material circumstance which ought to be considered in the performance of this kind of composition, is, the number and quality of those instruments that may produce the best effect.

And, 1st, I would propose, exclusive of the four principal parts which must be always complete, that the chorus of other instruments should not exceed the number following, viz. six *primo*, and four *secondo repienos*; four *repieno basses*, and two *double basses*, and a *harpsichord*. A lesser number of instruments, near the same proportion, will also have a proper effect, and may answer the composer's intention; but more would probably destroy the just contrast, which should always be kept up between the *chorus* and *solo*: for in this case the effect of two or three single instruments would be lost and over-powered by the succession of too grand a *chorus*; and to double the *primo*, and *secondo concertino*, or *violoncello* in the *solo*, would be an impropriety in the conduct of our musical œconomy, too ob-

I

vious

vious to require any thing to be said on that head. It may be objected, perhaps, that the number of *basses*, in the above calculation, would be found too powerful for the *violins*: but as the latter instruments are in their tone so clear, sprightly, and piercing, and as they rather gain more force by this addition, they will always be heard: however, if it were possible, there should never be wanting a *double bass*; especially in a performance of full concertos, as they cannot be heard to any advantage without that NOBLE FOUNDATION of their harmony.

As to wind-instruments, these are all so different in their tone, and in their progressions through the various keys, from those of the stringed kind, besides the irremediable disagreement of their rising in their pitch, while the others are probably falling, that they should neither be continued too long in use, nor employed but in such pieces as are expressly adapted to them; so that in the general work of concertos, for violins,

&c. they are almost always improper; unless we admit of the *bassoon*, which, if performed by an expert hand, in a soft and ready tone, and only in those passages that are natural to it, may then be of singular use, and add fullness to the harmony.

Did every performer know the *fort* of his instrument, and where its best expression lay, *there* to exert it most; I should have but little pretence for my present attempt in the ensuing directions.

2dly, In the four principal parts there ought to be four performers of almost equal mastery; as well in regard to *time* as *execution*; for however easy it may seem to acquire the former, yet nothing more shews a master than a steady performance throughout the whole movement, and therefore chiefly necessary in the leading parts. But this rule is generally neglected by placing one of the worst hands to the *tenor*; which, though a part of little execution, yet requires so much meaning and expression, that the

performer should not only give a fine tone, (the peculiar quality of that instrument) but by swelling and singing of the notes, and entering into the spirit of the composer, know, without destroying the *air*, where to fill the *harmony*; and, by boldly pointing the subject, keep it up with the greatest energy ^c.

3dly, The same rule will serve for all the other instruments except the *harp*-*chord*; and as this is only to be used in the *chorus*, the performer will have little else to regard but the striking just chords, keeping the time, and being careful that no jangling sound or scattering of the

^c As when we find a just and happy subserviency in all the under parts of a composition, we conclude the composer to be a man of experience and good sense: so also, those only are the performers of discernment and good taste, who can feel, and, with delight, express those beauties undistinguished by the common ear.

It is their part also to discern, how little it avails, to attempt any service in the performance, where these attendants to the principal part, are either superfluous in themselves, or inharmonious in their effect; and where they destroy, instead of aiding the *master-subject*, or other appointed *airs* in the piece.

notes

notes be continued after the pause or cadence. During this interval of rest, he should also attend, with the utmost exactness, the leading off again the remaining part of the movement, that when all the parts are thus instantly struck, his own may be found to pervade and fill the whole: and if there are any rests succeeding the pause, his attention to the leading instrument will direct him when these are to commence. The same care is necessary at the return of each double strain, when there are no intermediate notes to introduce the repeat. In fine, a profound silence must be always observed, wherever the composer has intended a general respite, or pause in his work. I am the more particular in giving this caution to performers on the harpsichord, as they are the most liable to transgress in this way; because their instrument, lying so commodious to their fingers, is ever tempting them to run like wild-fire over the keys, and thus perpetually interrupt the performance. As compositions of

this nature are not calculated for the sake of any one instrument, but to give a grand effect by uniting many, each performer ought therefore to consider his particular province, and so far only to exert himself as may be consistent with the harmony and expression in his part. Nor let any lover of Music be concerned if there is but little for him to execute, since he will thence have some leisure for the pleasure of hearing: for this reason, the under parts in good compositions are more eligible to the performer, who would rather enjoy the whole than be distinguished alone.

The use of the *Acciaccatura*^f, or sweeping of the chords, and the dropping or sprinkling notes, are indeed some of the peculiar beauties of this instrument, But these graceful touches are only reserved for a masterly application in the

^f For an explanation of the *Acciaccatura*, see GEMINIANI's introduction to a good taste of Music, printed at the head of his second collection of *Scotts* songs.

accompaniment of a fine voice, or single instrument; and therefore, besides the difficulty of acquiring a competent skill in them, they are not required in the performance of full Music.

Under this article I shall beg leave to offer an observation on the harpsichord concerto; a species of composition but of late invention, and which, if properly studied, will admit of considerable improvements. Hitherto we seem to have mistaken the property of this instrument, by not considering what it can, or cannot express. Hence it is, perhaps, that our composers have run all their concertos into little else than tedious divisions; and the subject or ground-work of these, being introduced and repeated by a chorus of violins, produce always a bad effect: whereas the violin parts should be but few, and contrived rather as accompaniments than symphonies; by which means they may assist greatly in striking out some kind of expression,

wherein the harpsichord ^s is remarkably deficient ^h.

The same method, perhaps, may be equally proper in concertos for the organ: which being frequently employed in other compositions, and at present so generally approved, it may not be amiss to consider it farther. For however capable this instrument may be found to fill or soften all the rest, it will nevertheless over-power and destroy them, if the performer is not extremely cautious and tender in the use of it. I would therefore propose that the accompaniments in the thorough-bass should never be struck in chords with the right-hand, as upon the harpsichord, but

^s See RAMEAU'S concertos for the harpsichord, published by Mr. WALSH.

^h Performers on the harpsichord, in concertos for that instrument, ought to take notice, that *staccato divisions*, on one note, should be played with different fingers, wherever it can be done with convenience; and not with one finger only, because, in this case, it is impossible to move the wrist (which the quick repetition of one note with one finger would require) with freedom enough to give these kind of passages their proper force.

in

in all the full parts the leading subject should be singly touched, and the performer proceed through the rest of the movement with the left-hand only. For this reason, no person whatever should attempt this instrument in concertos not expressly made for it, but from the *score*; and then, if he has judgement and discretion sufficient, he may enforce an expression, and assist every part throughout the whole chorus. Yet I cannot dismiss this article without once again observing, that the difficulties of rendering the organ of that use in full concert which many expect from it, are so various and intricate, that we can never be too careful of the performer's abilities; who, if thoroughly skillful, will so manage his instrument, that it may always be heard, but seldom distinguished.

4thly, As in all concertos, overtures, &c. where the *repieno* parts are more immediately necessary, the composer ought to pursue some design in filling each chorus, and relieving them with passages
either

either proper to be heard alone, or so contrived as to give a good effect to the repeated *chorus*; so in performing these different passages, a different manner must be observed. Thus, when the *solo* is contrived for the sake of some peculiar expression, it should then be performed in a manner suitable to the genius or character of the piece; but always plain, or however with such graces only as may heighten the expression without varying the time; and which, therefore, require other qualities besides an execution to do them justice: for this elegance of taste, in the performance of the solo, consists not in those agile motions, or shiftings of the hand, which strike with surprize the common ear, but in the tender and delicate touches, which to such indeed are least perceptible, but to a fine ear productive of the highest delight. Let not the performer then by an ill-judged execution misapply this opportunity of shewing his skill in these remarkable places: for though it is not the advant-

age of instrumental compositions to be heightened in their expression by the help of words, yet there is generally, or ought to be, some idea of sense or passion, besides that of mere sound, conveyed to the hearerⁱ: on that account he should avoid all extravagant decorations, since every attempt of this kind must utterly destroy whatever passion the composer may have designed to express. And last of all let him consider, that a more than usual attention is expected to his principal part, when all the rest yield it this preference, of being distinguished and heard alone^k.

5thly,

ⁱ "La Poesia, e la Musica, gl'intendenti ben fanno son due arti gemelle, e tra loro si analoghe, che a pensare e favellar sanamente non vi dovrebbe esser Poesia senza Musica, ne Musica senza Poesia."

G. C. Beccelli.

^k "It is supposed, by many, that a real good taste cannot possibly be acquired by any rules of art; it being a peculiar gift of nature, indulged only to those who have naturally a good ear: and, as most flatter themselves they have this perfection, hence it happens, that he who sings or plays, thinks of nothing so much as to make continually some favourite passages or graces, believing that
" by

5thly, In the chorus, whether full in all the parts, or leading by fugues; the *violini di concertino*¹ should be pointed with spirit to each *ripieno*; these also should be instantly struck, without suffering the first note to slip, by which means they always lose their designed effect: an omission which many careless performers are guilty of, either through miscounting of rests, or depending upon others; and thus render the whole performance ragged and unmeaning.

6thly, When concertos are performed with three or four instruments only, it may not be amiss to play the solo parts *mezzo piano*; and to know more accu-

“ by this means he shall be thought to be a good
 “ performer, not perceiving that playing in good
 “ taste doth not consist of frequent passages, but in
 “ expressing, with strength and delicacy, the inten-
 “ tion of the composer *.”

These are the performers who execute all pieces with such a tasteless uniformity of manner, that they seem not to distinguish either what is good, or indifferent, or even what is execrable.

¹ Principal parts.

* Introduction to a good taste in Music, by GEMINIANI.

rately

rately where to find them, the first and last note of every chorus should be distinguished thus  and to prevent all

mistakes of pointing the *forte* at a wrong place, that also ought to have the same mark: by this means the performer will be directed to give the *first* note of every chorus and *forte* its proper emphasis, and not suffer the *latter* to hang upon the ear, which is extremely disagreeable.

Above all, to heighten this variety in the performance, it is essential to mark the change of stiles that may often be found in the same movement, and chiefly the *sofienute* and *staccato*, for in these are contained the greatest powers of expression on the violin.

Sounds continued, or succeeding each other without interruption, must be gently swelled and decreased, and this without drawling or languor. All cut sounds should be moderately struck, yet clear and distinct, that every shrill and sudden

den jerk with the bow may be entirely avoided.

Though few performers can feel the nice distinctions that lie between the beauties and errors in each of these stiles; yet many are sensible of their very opposite effects: and this circumstance alone will greatly assist those who would play either with tenderness or spirit.

7^{thly}, As discords in Music are like shades in painting, so is the *piano* like the fainter parts or figures in a picture; both which do greatly assist in constituting and supporting an agreeable variety. But, as in the case of Music so much depends upon the taste and accuracy of the performer, it is particularly necessary, that a strict regard be had to the *piano* and *forte*; for these, in the hands of a skillful composer, are generally so disposed as to afford a most pleasing relief; and, when justly executed, give great beauty and spirit to a composition. Yet how often do they pass unobserved, or, if at all expressed, in so careless and negligent a manner,

as to produce little, if any, sensible difference to the hearer! It is a common practice with those luke-warm performers, who imagine that diminishing the number of instruments will answer the same end as softening the whole, to quit their part when they should rather be all attention how to manage it with the utmost delicacy; transporting, as it were, like the swell-organ, the lessening sounds to a vast distance, and thence returning with redoubled strength and fullness to the *forte*: and as this delightful effect can only be found from a performance of many instruments together, we ought never to omit such opportunities of carrying this noble contrast to its highest perfection.

8^{thly}, When the inner parts are intended as accompaniments only, great care should be had to touch them in such a manner, that they may never predominate, but be always subservient to the principal performer, who also should observe the same method, whenever his part becomes

becomes an accompaniment; which generally happens in well-wrought fugues and other full pieces, where the subject and air are almost equally distributed. When the attention of every performer is thus employed by listening to the other parts, without which he cannot do justice to his own, it is then we may expect to hear the proper effect of the whole.

9thly, In every part throughout the full chorus, all manner of graces, or diminution of intervals, or transposition of eight notes higher, must be avoided; which some indiscreet performers are but too apt to make use of, merely from a desire of being distinguished, and that the audience may admire their execution. But these gentlemen ought to consider, that by such liberties they do not only disappoint the expecting ear, of a just performance of some favourite part, but often introduce and occasion *disallowances* in the harmony. From the same ruling passion we sometimes hear performers, the moment a piece is ended, run over their instru-

instrument, forgetting that order, like silence under arms in the military discipline, should also be observed in the discipline of Music.

Lastly, To point out in all the parts of full Music, their various subjects or fugues, I have ventured to introduce a new musical character, namely, this *mostra*

() or index : but as the particular use I would apply it to, may possibly be thought by some, a groundless innovation, it will therefore be necessary to say something in its defence and explanation ^m.

In all compositions for instruments in parts, which are published in separate books, and seldom perused in *score*, most performers are frequently at a loss, to know the composer's design : hence proceed many discordant *ricercate* ⁿ, where

^m See six concertos published by JOHNSON, where the use of this mark is applied : as this character is easily made by the pen, it may, with very little trouble, be added to the proper places, either in manuscript or other printed concertos that require it.

ⁿ Extempore flourishings.

only the full unmixed harmony should be heard. Another consequence has been, that, for want of some such character as the *mostra* above-mentioned, the very best contrivances in a good composition have often passed undistinguished and neglected. To remedy this defect, it seems necessary to point out in each part every *leading* and *responsive* fugue: for which purpose some particular mark should be placed over the first note of every *accidental* subject as well as *principal*; the former being rather more necessary to be thus distinguished, as every person capable of performing in concert must know the principal subject wherever it occurs, and therefore will of course give *that* its proper expression.

But the *accidental* subjects are, on account of their variety, much more difficult to be ascertained: sometimes indeed they are a part or accompaniment of the *principal*, and then may be styled a second or third subject, as they are generally repeated, or at least so retouched in
the

the progress of the fugue as to render them easily known. But yet there are oftentimes other subjects very different from the principal, and which being seldom or never repeated, are therefore still more necessary to be marked ; for having always some peculiar relation to the other parts, it is absolutely necessary that they should be justly expressed ; and this can only be done by a simple, plain, yet energetic execution : for wherever a subject is proposed, it can never with propriety admit of any variation. Expression alone being sufficient to give us every thing that can be desired from harmony.

Thus, by a due observance of some such character as the *mostra*, the performer will be greatly assisted to comprehend all the harmony and contrivances of the composer, and obtain an advantage and pleasure almost equal to that of playing from the score °.

By

° Though we may partly conjecture at the excellence of the *air* and *expression* of particular passages in a composition, without a complete performance in
K 2 all

By what has been said, it appears, that this mark will be of similar use in Music,

all the parts; yet of the *harmony* and relation these may bear to each other, we cannot form a peremptory judgement: and more especially as we are often deceived in our opinions of full Music, from those faint and imperfect trials, to which, for want of proper hands, they are frequently exposed; where these are deficient, whether in number or abilities, I know not a more effectual test than a good harpsichord and performance from the *score*, where the eye will assist the ear through all the defects of this instrument, and give a better idea of the composer's design than any unsuccessful attempt in concert.

For this reason, were the printers of Music to publish the best *concertos* and *sonatas* in *score*, as are those of CORELLI; perhaps this very expedient, though it may seem hazardous at first, would contribute more to a general good taste and knowledge of Music, than any yet thought of; and the success that may reasonably be expected from so useful an undertaking, will, in the long-run, amply reward them for all their trouble and expence.

I have heard the first publisher of CORELLI's works in *score*, very frankly acknowledge, that the profits received from the sale of these books, were greater than could have been expected: and, as the public has had almost twenty years trial of the advantages that have accrued from such an intimate acquaintance with this classical composer; it cannot, I think, be doubted but a like good effect might also attend a publication in *score* of GEMINIANI's concertos; and of other compositions in parts, which may have deservedly gained a reputation.

to that of *capitals*, *italicks*, and other orthographical illustrations in writing; and therefore, perhaps, may make the chance which a musical author has for success, more nearly equal to that of a literary one; for it is certain that the former at present lies under so many additional disadvantages, that whatever serves to lessen or remove any of them, should be thought an invention of no trivial utility.

For instance, how often does the fate of a concerto depend on the random execution of a sett of performers who have never previously considered the work, examined the connection of its parts, or studied the intention of the whole?

Was a dramatic author in such a situation, as that the success of his play depended on a single recital, and that too by persons thus unprepared; I fancy he would scarce chuse to run the risk, though he had even Mr. GARRICK for one of his rehearsers. Yet what the poet never did, nor ever will venture, the

harmonist is of necessity compelled to, and that also frequently when he has not yet acquired a character to prejudice the audience in his favour, or is in any situation to prevent their first censure from being determinate and final.

A LETTER

A
LETTER to the AUTHOR,
CONCERNING

The Music of the ANCIENTS.

S I R,

THE Music of the Ancients and of the Moderns hath been often and fully discussed by the learned, and I have only a slender and superficial knowledge of the theory either of the former or of the latter. What is it then that I can offer you upon this subject? In truth nothing better than a few straggling passages of *classic authors* relating to Music, and a few slight remarks added to them.

Horace, Serm. I. iii. 6. says of *Tigellius*;

— *Si collibuisse, ab ovo*

Usque ad mala citaret, Io Bacche, modo summa

Voce, modo hac resonat chordis quæ quatuor ima.

K 4

i. e. He

i. e. *He sang sometimes in the note of the upper string, sometimes in that of the lowest string of the tetrachord.*

The *tetrachord* here is to be considered, not as a particular instrument, but as four strings bearing a certain musical proportion to each other, of which, in the *diatonic* scale, the second was a *semitone*, the third a *tone*, and the last a *tone*, and a *fourth* to the first, as the *natural* notes, B, C, D, E. The *first* and *fourth*, in all tetrachords, were fixed and immoveable, (*φθόγγοι ἀκίνητοι*,) and one of them was called *Ἑπάρη*, *summa*, the *highest*; the other, *Νήτη*, *ima*, the *lowest*. The *highest* was that chord which gave the *deepest* or *gravest* sound, the *lowest* that which gave the *acutest* sound; and therefore, what we call *ASCENDING*, they called *DESCENDING*. Thus for example, if you compare the *open* strings of a violin to the tetrachord, (though their proportions are not the same,) the string which sounds G, would have been with them the *highest*,
and

and that which sounds E, would have been the lowest.

As in their tetrachord, their *lowest* was a *fourth* to their *highest*, the sense of Horace is, that Tigellius sang the air, *Io Bacche*, and then would sing it over again, what we call, a *fourth higher*. *Vox summa* is the bass, and *vox ima* the treble.

Apply this to the *Music of the spheres*. The old *planetary system* may be considered as an *heptachord*, an instrument with seven strings, answering to the seven notes in Music. The diameter of the orbit of each planet is the string. *Saturn*, who is the remotest, and hath the longest chord, and gives the deepest sound, is the musical *ὑπάτη*, or *highest*; and he is so described by *Pliny*, and so called by *Nicomachus*. But in settling this *celestial harmony*, the Ancients are by no means agreed; which indeed is no wonder, for *sense* is uniform, and *nonsense* admits of endless variations.

The concords of the Ancients were the *fourth*, *fifth*, and *eighth*. The *third*,
major,

major, or minor, they held to be a *discord*, and in *concert* they seem to have only admitted the *eighth*.

The ANCIENT *diatonic* system was a, b, c, d, e, f, g, A, b, c, d, e, f, g; a answering to the *natural* notes of the harpsichord; with two *semitones*, and five tones, in an *octave*.

Of this system, our *a-mi-la*, or *a-la-mi-re*, was the *Méson*, the *middle*, or *center*.

Their *seven modes*, or *tones*, in the *diatonic* system, seem to have been reducible, in *reality*, to *one mode*, taken higher or lower; or to have been *six transpositions* of *one natural, original, and fundamental mode*, (which you may call the *mode* of A,) and consequently, as C *natural* is a *minor third* to *a-mi-la*, so all these *modes* must have had a *minor third*.

P *Sanadon* and *Cerceau*, in their observations on *Horace*, Carm. v. 9,

Sonante

P *Dacier* and *Sanadon* have published elaborate and useful commentaries upon *Horace*, for which they deserve commendation; but if it may be permitted to say the plain truth, they too often made free with the property of others, and were *compillagers*, *poachers*,
and

*Sonante mixtum tibiis carmen lyra,
Hac dorium, illis barbarum,*

affirm that the *modus dorius* answered exactly to our *a-mi-la* with a *minor third*; and the *modus pbrygius* to our *a-mi-la* with a *major third*: but surely this is a *musical error*, and a *dream* from the *ivory gate*. Two *modes* (with the same *tonic* note) the one neither *acuter* nor *graver* than the other, make no part of the old system of *modes*.

Suppose the strings of an harpsichord are too low exactly by a whole tone. Strike the keys,

a, b, c, d, e, f, g, ^a A.

and you will have the sounds of,

g, a, b b, c, d, e b, f, g.

The *nominal* keys, and the *intervals* will remain; the *musical powers* and *sounds* will be changed.

and *smugglers* in the *republic of literature*. As reputation is usually the only reward which the learned obtain for their labours, it is the more fit that it should be impartially bestowed. If this rule were observed, some who ride in *Fame's chariot*, would be obliged to trudge on foot, or to get up behind it.

^a A-la-mi-re.

Or

Or else, if the harpsichord is in tune,
in the ^r usual pitch, strike,

g, a b $\sharp$, c, d, e $\sharp$, f, g:
and call them,

a, b, c, d, e, f, g, A.

This seems to be the *mystery* of the
Ancient *modes*: they are all to be considered as

a, b, c, d, e, f, g, A.

Or in other words, they are all, first,
a note; second, a tone; third, a semitone;
fourth, a tone; fifth, a tone; sixth,
a semitone; seventh, a tone; eighth, a
tone.

Or they are, a note; a second; a minor
third; a fourth; a fifth; a minor
sixth; a minor seventh; an eighth.

But when the *mode* is changed, the
sounds are altered, *lower* or *higher*, *acuter*
or *graver*.

In the *names* of the *seven modes*, and
in the *flats*, *sharps*, and *naturals*, which

^r This reminds me to ask you a question, whether
there be in Music any rule and standard for a true
pitch?

will correspond to them, when they are reduced to our modern musical system, the writers and commentators on Ancient Music are not agreed: but still the system upon the whole, the proportions, and the intervals are the same.

Now suppose two instruments of the Ancients sounding together, and playing the same air, one in one *mode*, and one in another; they must have founded all along, either *seconds*, or *thirds*, or *fourths*, or *fifths*, or *sixths*, or *sevenths*. But if the Ancients would admit none of these, not even *fifths* in *concert*, (which the learned, I think, take to have been the case) there remains nothing besides *unisons*; and *octaves*, *simple* or *double*, for their *concerts*.

Seneca thus describes a *concert* or *chorus*:
non vides, quam multorum vocibus chorus constet? unus tamen ex omnibus sonus redditur. Aliqua illic acuta est, aliqua gravis, aliqua media. Accedunt viris feminae, interponuntur tibiae. Singulorum illic latent voces, omnium apparent. Epist. 84. And
Ælian on *Timæus*, and the writer *De*
Mundo,

Mundo, and in general all who have treated of this subject, represent Ἀρμονίαν and Συμφωνίαν, *harmony* and *symphony*, as consisting in the mixture and union of sounds which are ὀξεῖς and βαρεῖς, *acute* and *grave*.

In a *double octave*, or *fifteen notes*, the *vox media* is the *middle note*, the *vox acuta* is an *eighth above* it (in our way of counting) and the *vox gravis* an *eighth below* it; and so in this *chorus*, all seem to have gone together in *unisons* and *octaves*.

From *Ptolemy*, and his commentator, *Wallis*, it may be collected how (according to their system) the *seven modes* answer to our notes; and also how they stood related to each other, not according to the vicinity of notes, and as B is next to A, but as one mode produced another at the intervals of *fourths* or of *fifths*, which seem to have been the passages by which the Ancients made transitions from mode to mode.

So likewise, in our modern system, and in the *major tone*, the key of C *natural* requires

requires none but *natural* notes. Go to the *fifth* of C, and enter into the key of G, and you must add one *sharp*. Go to the *fifth* of G, and enter into the key of D, and you must add another *sharp*; and so on. Or, if you proceed by *fourths*, go to the *fourth* of C, and enter into F, and you must add one *flat*. Go to the *fourth* of F, and enter into B *flat*, and you must add another *flat*, &c. The same is to be done in the *minor tone*.

The *keys* may be considered as related to each other, more or less, according as their transposition makes more or less alteration in the system. If you go from a *key* with a *major third*, to the *sixth* of that *key* with a *minor third*, no alteration is made in the descending *flats*, *sharps*, or *naturals*. They seem therefore to be as near of kin, as a *major* and a *minor* tone can be.

I shall here mention some of the advantages which the modern *diatonic* system seems to have above the Ancient.

1. By

1. By dividing every *tone* into *semitones* we have a great variety of *transposed keys*, or *modes*, or *tones*.

2. By making use of the *major* and *minor third*, we have *two* real and distinct *tones*, a *major* and a *minor*, which may be said to divide Music, as nature seems to have intended, into the *male* and the *female*. The first hath strength, the second hath softness; and sweetness belongs to them both.

3. Our *minor tone* is improved by borrowing from its *major tone* a *major sixth* and *seventh*, to help its progress to the *eighth*. Thus A with a *minor third* takes the *sharp F*, and the *sharp G*, from A with a *major third*, when it ascends to its *octave*, and quits them when it descends.

4. By the aid of *semitones*, we can mix the *chromatic* with the *diatonic* Music.

The INTRODUCING a succession of *semitones* hath, on proper occasions, a beautiful effect, as in *Handel's* incomparable *ombra chara*, in his *Radamistus*, an opera abound-

abounding with the happiest union and mixture of *art* and *invention*.

The DIVISION of *semitones* into *major* and *minor*, and the *quarter notes*, which belong to the *enharmonic* system, are no inconsiderable part of *theoretical* Music. The harpsichord takes no notice of them, not being divided for that purpose; but though in this and in some other respects it be defective, it hath the advantage of being a very practicable and a most agreeable instrument, and of accommodating itself well enough to the change of keys, and to all keys that are not overloaded with *flats* or *sharps*; especially when the defects are so judiciously distributed by the tuner, as not to offend the ear grossly in any place; which seems to be the best *temperature* of the *musical circle*.

I forgot to say a word or two concerning the origin and generation of the *diatonic* system.

The old *tetrachord* was B, C, D, E. Add another to it of the same kind, and with the same proportions, E, F, G, A.

L

Join

Join them, B, C, D, E, F, G, A. Add an octave at the bottom, A, B, C, D, E, F, G, A.

As the first tetrachord had a *minor second*, that *second* becomes a *minor third*, when A is added below.

What I have said upon this subject, is, I hope, intelligible, at least. Some of the modern writers upon Ancient Music are deficient in point of perspicuity, and seldom give the attentive reader instruction, without giving him the head-ach along with it.

The MODERN *musical language* or *character*, as expressed by our *notation*, is perhaps of all languages the most true and exact, and liable to the fewest defects, obscurities, and ambiguities; and if the time of *grave*, *adagio*, *largo*, &c. could be equally ascertained, nothing would be wanting to make it complete. But that is a point which you have taken into consideration, p. 108, &c. and to you I leave it.

The

The TUNES which were played to *odes* like those of *Horace*, must have been plain and simple, because of the speedy return of the same stanza, and because of the *quantity* of the syllables, which was not to be violated, or at least, not greatly, by the Music. The modern musicians who have attempted to set such Latin or Greek *odes* to Music, have often too much neglected this rule of suiting the *tune* to the *metre*, and have made *long* syllables *short*, and *short* syllables *long*, and run *divisions* upon single ones, and repeated some of the words.

In modern *vocal Music* we regard not this law, but perpetually sacrifice the *quantity* to the *modulation*; which yet surely is a fault: but the fault is partly, if not principally, in our language, a language harsh, and unmusical, and full of *consonants*, and of syllables *long* by *position*. Thus in the ALEXIS of Dr. *Pepusch*, a very fine *cantata*, you have;

*Charm-ing—sounds—that—sweet-ly—lan-
guish, &c.*

L 2

These

These syllables, according to the laws of *prosody*, are all long, except the sixth. In the Music you have a *demi-quaver* to the first syllable, a *demi-quaver* to the second, a *quaver* to the third, &c. and the finger is obliged to shorten long syllables, as well as he can.

To judge of our language in this respect, you may compare an English *heroic* verse, with a *supernumerary* foot, to a Greek *iambic*.

Arms and the man I sing, who urg'd by stubborn fate.

Ἀεὶ μὲν, ὦ παῖ Λαρτίε, δέδορκα σε.

Here are the same number of *feet*, of *syllables*, and of *vowels* (or *diphthongs*) in each; but more than twice the number of *consonants* in the English verse.

The tunes of *Anacreontic* songs must have been still more simple than those of *odes*:

Θέλω λέγειν Ἀτρείδας.

Of noble race was Shinkin.

The *hymns*, which consist of a pretty long *strophe*, *antistrophe*, and *epodus*,
such

such as those of *Pindar*, gave more scope to the musician, and seem to have been susceptible of better *melody*, and more variety; and perhaps those *odes* and *hymns*, and *choruses*, where the metre is latent, and less pleasing to our ears when we repeat them, had more artful tunes adapted to them, than the *Sapphic* and *Alcaic* odes, which to us sound more agreeably.

If we had the old musical notes which were set to any particular *ode* or *hymn*, that is extant, I should not despair of finding out the length of each note; for the *quantity* of the syllables would probably be a tolerable guide; and I would consent to truck the works of *Signior Alberti* for the tune that was set to *Pindar's*

Χρυσέα φόρμιγξ Ἀπόλλωνος—

For as to *Vivaldi*, give me leave to say, that with all his caprices and puerilities, he has a mixture of good things, and could do well when he had a mind to it.

As the *chorus* of Greek tragedies, and the *dithyrambic odes* were often transcendently sublime, and soared far above the regions of *common sense*, up to those of *Eustian* and *Galimatias*, if the imagination of the musician was as red hot as that of the poet, there were perhaps old musical *extravaganzas* not inferior to those of any modern.

There is one *ode* in *Horace*, *Carm.* III. 12. which runs in the measure of two *short*, and two *long*;

Miserarum est | *neque amori* | *dare ludum* | *neque dulci*, &c.

This falls into *triple time*, and a sort of *saraband* might be made to it, with two *quavers* followed by two *crotchets* in each *bar*. The *air* was undoubtedly of that kind.

The Music then of the Ancients seems in general to have been more simple than ours, and perhaps it would not have the same effect upon us as it had upon them, if we could retrieve it. We should
 2/4 4 probably

probably find in it something to commend, and something to censure. For many reasons it may be supposed to have been superior beyond all measure to the execrable Music of the modern Greeks, the Turks, Persians, and Chinese, which yet is charming in their ears, and in their fond opinion would affect even things inanimate,

With magic numbers, and persuasive sound.

Thus it is with Music: bad seems good, till you get acquainted with better.

Yet one considerable advantage which arose even from the simplicity of the ancient tunes, and which greatly set off their concert of vocal and instrumental music, was that the singer could be understood, and that the words had their effect as well as the music; and then the charms of elegant and pathetic poesy, aided and set off by the voice, person, manner, and accent of the singer, and by the sound of instruments, might affect the hearer very strongly. We must add to this the har-

monious and unrivalled sweetness of the
 * Greek language,

* — *cui non certaverit ulla,
 Aut tantum fluere, aut totidem durare per annos.*

But in modern performances of this kind, if you are not acquainted with the song, it is often entirely lost to you; nor can you always hear it distinctly, even when you know it by heart, or have it before you to read.

As to *instrumental Music*, the fashion seems to be to precipitate in all lively and brisk movements. This indeed shews a

* As the Latin tongue surpasses ours in sweetness, so the Greek surpasses the Latin. “When I had taught my little boy his Greek nouns and verbs (says *Tanaquil Faber*) he told me one day a thing that surprized me, for he had it not from me. “Methinks, said he, the sound of the Greek tongue is much more agreeable than that of the Latin. “You are in the right, said I; for in it you hear “neither *frat*, nor *crat*, nor *quit*, nor *brant*, nor “*trant*, nor *mit*, nor *put*, nor *git*, &c. which are “the common sounds of Latin terminations. By “this I perceived that the boy had a good ear, “which I took as a presage that his taste and his “judgement would, one day, be good; having often “observed that this is one of the earliest and best “marks of a child’s capacity.”

* *Virgil. Georg. Il. 99.*

hand;

hand; but the Music often suffers by it; and a man may play, as well as talk, so fast that none can understand him. I have heard such performers, who had what is called *execution*, lead off the *fugues* at such a rate, that one half of their companions were thrown out, and obliged to jump in again, as well as they could, from time to time. Yet the *violino principale* chose rather to put up with a thousand *dissonances*, than to abate of his speed; a sure proof that if his hand was the hand of *Apollo*, his ears were the ears of *Midas*, and that he felt no part of the Music but his own.

The SURPRISING powers of Music, as related by several of the Ancients, may justly pass for exaggerations. When *Horace* tells us that a *wolf* fled from him, who met him in the woods, as he was chanting the praises of the fair *Lalagé*, we conclude either that it is a poetical fib, or that he sang so ill as to frighten the *savage*.

But

But surely Music deserves the *sober compliment* paid to it by the same poet, when he calls it the *assuager of cares*.

— *Minuentur atra*

Carmine curæ.

It ^{is} helps to relieve and sooth the mind, and is a sort of refuge from some of the evils of life, from slights, and neglects, and censures, and insults, and disappointments; from the *warmth* of real enemies, and the *coldness* of pretended friends; from your *well-wishers* (as they may justly be called, in opposition to *well-doers*) whose inclinations to serve you always decrease, in a most mathematical proportion, as their opportunities to do it increase; from

*The * proud man's contumely, and the spurns
Which patient merit of th' unworthy takes;*

* *Atque eam [Musicen] natura ipsa videtur ad tolerandos facilius labores velut muneri nobis dedisse. Siquidem et remigem cantus hortatur: nec solum in iis operibus, in quibus plurium conatus, præeunte aliqua jucunda voce, conspirat, sed etiam singulorum fatigatio quamlibet se rudi modulatione solatur.*
Quintilian, l. 10.

* *Shakespeare,*

from

from grievances that are the growth of all times and places, and not peculiar to *this* age, which (says *Swift*) the poets call *this censorious age*, and the divines *this sinful age*: some of my neighbours call it *this learned age*, in due reverence to their own abilities, and like Monsieur *Balzac*, who used to pull off his *beaver* when he spake of *himself*: the *Poet Laureat* calls it *this golden age*, when, according to *Ovid's* description of it,

*Flumina jam lactis, jam flumina nectaris ibant ;
Flavaque de viridi stillabant ilice mella.
For me the fountains with Canary flow ;
And, best of fruit, spontaneous Guineas grow.*

Pope, in his *Dunciad*, makes it *this leaden age*. But I chuse to call it *this age*, without an epithet.

Many things we must expect to meet with, which it would be hard to bear, if a compensation were not to be found in honest endeavours to do well, in virtuous affections, and connections, and in harmless and reasonable amusements. And why should

should not a man amuse himself sometimes? *Vive la Bagatelle!*

I mention this, principally, with a view to the case of *others*; (*Homo sum: humani nihil a me alienum puto:*) having found more friends, and received more favours and courtesies, than, as the world goes, fall to the share of one person.

Milton therefore (to return to the point) who loved this art, and was himself a performer and a composer, most beautifully introduces the polite and gentle part of his *fallen spirits*, as having recourse to it, in their anguish and distress:

— *Others more mild,*

Retreated in a silent valley, sing

With notes angelical to many a harp

Their own heroic deeds, and hapless fall

By doom of battle; and complain that Fate

Free virtue should inthrall to force or chance.

Their song was partial, but the harmony

(What could it less when spirits immortal sing?)

Suspended bell, and took with ravishment

The thronging audience.

“ Being in the country one day, I had a
“ mind to see whether beasts, as it is com-

“ monly

" monly said of them, take pleasure in Mu-
 " sic. Whilst my companion was play-
 " ing upon an instrument, I considered
 " attentively a cat, a dog, a horse, an ass,
 " a hind, some cows, some little birds, and
 " a cock and hens, which were in the
 " court, below the window where we
 " stood. The cat paid no regard to the
 " Music, and, to judge by his physiogno-
 " my, he would have given all the sym-
 " phonies in the world for one mouse;
 " he stretched himself out in the sun, and
 " went to sleep. The horse stopped short
 " before the window, and as he was graz-
 " ing, he raised his head from time to
 " time. The dog sat him down upon his
 " bum, like a monkey, fixing his eyes
 " stedfastly on the musician, and conti-
 " nued a long time in the same posture,
 " with the air and attitude of a *connoisseur*.
 " The ass took no notice at all of us,
 " munching his thistles very demurely.
 " The hind set up her large broad ears,
 " and seemed extremely attentive. The
 " cows gave us a look, and then marched
 " off.

“ off. The little birds in a cage, and in
 “ the trees, strained their throats, and sang
 “ with the utmost eagerness; whilst the
 “ cock minded nothing but the hens, and
 “ the hens busied themselves in scratch-
 “ ing the dunghill.” *Vigneul Marville* †,

Imagine these creatures to be human creatures, and you will have no bad representation of one of our *politest assemblies* at a musical performance.

Virgil. Æn. vi. 645.

*Nec non Threïcius longa cum veste Sacerdos
 Obloquitur numeris septem discrimina vocum,
 Jamque eadem digitis, jam pectine pulsat eburno.*

In these lines, (which I do not remember to have seen well explained,) *septem discrimina vocum* are the seven notes of Music, or musical sounds, in general. *Numeri* are airs or tunes; as in *Ecl. ix. 45.*

— *numeros memini, si verba tenerem.* †

I remember the tune, if I could recollect the words.

Obloqui is, to sing the same notes that the strings sound.

† This author has related some strange stories concerning the effects of Music upon animals. *Mélanges*, tom. iii. p. 59.

Orpheus

Orpheus therefore accompanies his lyre with his voice, in his melodious airs; singing, and striking the chords, now with his fingers, now with the *plectrum*, or *peeten*, or bow, or quill, or what you please to call it.

Plato frequently declares, that no innovations ought to be allowed in Music. I am sorry for it, since it gives reason to think that he and his contemporaries had poor and narrow notions of this art: for by these rigid laws they effectually discouraged and excluded all improvements.

In his treatise *De Legibus*, VII. 749. *Ed. Serr.* he advises to train up children to use the right and the left hand indifferently. In some things, says he, we can do it very well, as when we use the lyre with the left hand, and the stick with the right.

Ἀντρά μὲν ἐν ἀριστερᾷ χρώμενον, πλήκτῳ δὲ ἐν δεξιᾷ, πρᾶγμα ὁδόν. It may be collected from this, that the fingers of the left hand were occupied in some manner upon the strings; else, barely to hold a lyre, shewed no very free use of the left hand: and it appears from *Ptolemy* ii. 12. that they used both hands

hands at once in playing upon the lyre, and that the fingers of the left were employed, not in stopping, but in striking the strings.

Plato also observes that *practical* Music, or the art of playing in tune, and in concert, is a conjectural skill, grounded on long practice and habit, but not capable of certainty and infallibility : for arts, says he, consist in a great measure in experience and conjecture, rather than in fixed rules.

The POEM of *Catullus*, called *Atys*, seems to have been an imitation of those pieces which were sung by the *Galli*, the castrated and mad priests of *Cybele*, to a little drum, or to a *tabor* and pipe, two instruments constantly used by those rascals.

The metre of this poem abounds with short syllables, and expresses *precipitation* and *distraction*; and the last syllable, with the four short ones which go before it,

Super alta vectus Atys celeri rate maria :
were probably accompanied with five thumps upon the drum.

Claudian,

Claudian, about *A. D.* 400, and *Vitruvius* long before him, and other ancient writers, speak of *hydraulic organs*, which resembled our *organ*, and had many pipes, and many keys, upon which the performer had an opportunity of shewing the agility of his fingers.

*Et qui magna levi detrudens murmura tactu,
Innumeras voces segetis modulatus ænæ,
Intonet erranti digito, penitusque trabali
Veste laborantes in carmina concitet undas.*

Claudian Conf. Mall. Theod. 315.

The invention of the *hydraulic organ* is ascribed to *Ctesibius*, an Alexandrian, who flourished nineteen hundred years ago.

Lucretius, who lived about an hundred years after him, or somewhat more, seems to mention the *organ* as an instrument of modern invention: for though the word *organum* means any musical instrument, and *organicus* any musician, yet *Lucretius* means a particular instrument, because he speaks of it as of a late improvement, v. 333.

*Quare etiam quædam nunc artes expoliuntur,
Nunc etiam augeſcunt; nunc addita navigiis ſunt
Multa: modo organici melicoſe peperere ſonores.*

Where Creech, though a good editor, gives us a very queer interpretation: *nuper ab organicis muſica reperta eſt*. As if Muſic had been lately invented in the time of *Lucretius*!

It ſhould be obſerved however, that they who played upon lyres, or ſtringed instruments, are called *organici* by *Lucretius* ii. 412.

— *Muſæa mele, per chordas organici quæ
Mobilibus digitis expergeſacta figurant.*

I dare not ſuppoſe that he means the *harpsichord*, and that ſuch an instrument was then in uſe.

In the year 757, *Pepin* king of France received ambaffadors from the emperor ² *Conſtantine*, who amongſt other preſents, ſent him an *organ*. The hiſtorians of thoſe times have made particular mention of this, becauſe it was the firſt organ

² *Conſtantine Copronymus.*

that ever was seen in France. *Annal. Nazâr. &c.*

Bartbius, who had read all things, good, bad, and indifferent, and was an excellent *book-louse*, hath collected, in his notes upon *Claudian*, some passages of ancient authors concerning the construction and the loudness of this instrument. *It bath the voice of thunder*, says one of them, *and may be heard distinctly at the distance of a mile, and more.*

Tertullian's description of it, though in his uncouth language, deserves to be transcribed: *Speſta—Organum Hydraulicum,—tot membra, tot partes, tot compagine, tot itinera vocum, tot compendia sonorum, tot commercia modorum, tot acies tiliarum, et una moles erunt omnia. Spiritus ille, qui de tormento aquæ anbelat, per partes administratur, substantia solidus, opera divisus. De Anima.* To understand the good father, you must know that he compares the soul which animates the human body, and acts in every part of it, to the wind which fills the organ.

Isaac Vossius hath also some remarks upon the ancient organ, in his book *De Poëmatum Cantu*, which he wrote with a view to extol the Music of the Ancients, and to depress that of all the moderns, except his favourites, the *Chinese*. In this treatise, as in most of his works, there are some learned, ingenious, and useful observations, mixed with others that are fantastical and extravagant.

As the organs of the Ancients had many pipes and keys; so their lyres or harps had many strings, as fifteen, twenty, some say thirty, and more. If their lyre is represented in old monuments as having only four or five, or seven strings, that seems to have been done (as *Vossius* observes), partly, to represent the lyre, as it was originally, and in its state of infancy.

One would think that an ancient musician, who was well acquainted with *concord*s and *discord*s, who had an instrument of many strings or many keys to play upon, and two hands and ten fingers to make use of, would try experiments, and would

fall

fall into something like *counterpoint*, and *composition in parts*. In speculation, nothing seems more probable; and it seemed more than probable to our skilful musician Dr *Pepusch*, when I once conversed with him upon the subject. But, in fact, it doth not appear that the Ancients had this kind of composition, or rather it appears that they had it not; and it is certain that a man shall overlook discoveries, which stand at his elbow, and in a manner obtrude themselves upon him.

Supereſt, de Veterum Melopœia monendum, ſimplicem eam fuiſſe, et, quantum quidem ego perſentio, non niſi unius, ut jam loquimur, vocis: ut qui in ea fuerit concentus, in ſonorum ſequela ſpectaretur; quem nempe faceret ſonus antecedens aliquis cum ſequentē.—

Ea vero, quæ in hodierna Muſica conſpicitur, partium, ut loquuntur, ſeu vocum duarum, trium, quatuor, pluriarumve inter ſe conſenſio, concinentibus inter ſe qui ſimul audiuntur ſonis, veteribus erat, quantum ego video, ignota. Quanquam enim tale quid

innuere videantur quæ apud Ptolemaum occurrunt voces aliquot, ἐπιφαλμός, σύγκρησις, ἀναπλοκή, καταπλοκή, σύρμα, ἢ ὅλως ἢ διὰ τῶν ὑπερβαλῶν φθόγων συμπλοκή, (quæ desiderari dicit, præ aliis instrumentis, in Monochordo Canone, eo quod manus percutiens unica sit, nec possit distantia loca simul pertingere :) quæ faciunt ut plures aliquando chordas una percussas putem: id tamen rarius factum puto, in unis aut alteris subinde sonis; non in continuis, ut aiunt, partibus, ut sunt apud nos, bassus, tenor, contra-tenor, discantus, altera alteri succinente; aut etiam in divisionibus, ut loquuntur, seu minuritionibus cantui tardiori concinentibus. Quorum ego, in veterum Musica vix ulla vestigia, haud certa saltem, deprehendo.

Adeoque omnino mihi persuadeo, neque veterum musicam accuratiorem nostra fuisse, neque prodigiosos illos effectus, qui memorari solent, in hominum animos, puta ab Orpbeo, Amphione, Timotheo, &c. præstitos, olim obtigisse; nisi per audacem satis Hyperbolen ab Historicis enarratos dicas; vel id ob summam Musices raritatem, magis quam

præstantiam, apud imperitam plebem contigisse.

At hoc interim facile concesserim, cum id sibi solum fere proponant hodierni Musici, ut animum oblectent; potius quam, quod affectasse videntur Veteres, ut affectus huc illuc trahant; fieri omnino potest, ut in movendis affectibus ipsi quam nos peritiores fuerint.

Adde quod eorum Musica simplicior, unusque vocis, non ita prolata verba obscurabat, ut nostra magis composita: unde fiebat ut, verbi gratia, Tragica Verba cum Gestu Tragico, Tragico Carmine, Sonoque Tragico prolata (quæ omnia componebant eorum Musicam) non mirum si Tragicos Affectus concitabant.—Pariterque in cæteris affectibus.
Wallis *Append. ad Ptolem.* p. 175. *ed. fol.*

The CHARACTERS of the Ancient Music may be seen, as in many other authors, so in the *Palæographia Græca* of Montfaucon.

Thus, Sir, I have ventured, I know not how, to add a few thoughts to yours, upon the subject of Music, and to offer them to the lovers of this art, who find-

ing me here in good company, may perhaps shew some favour to the *Appendix*, for the sake of the *Essay*.

Horace, Epist. II. ii. 141. grows very serious, and says ;

*Nimirum sapere est abjectis utile nugis,
Et tempestivum pueris concedere ludum ;
Ac non verba sequi fidibus modulanda Latinis,
Sed veræ numerosque modosque ediscere vitæ.*

That is : *After all, it is proper to leave these amusements to young people, who may trifle with a better grace ; and instead of being always occupied in composing songs and tunes, and in adapting sounds and words to each other, to study Moral Modulations, and the art of keeping our actions consonant to the dictates of reason.*

It is very true : there is no *harmony* so charming as that of a well-ordered life, moving in concert with the sacred laws of virtue. Human nature, indeed, cannot hope to arrive at this perfection : the instrument will sometimes be out of tune ; disallowances also and dissonances will be sprinkled up and down ; but they ought

soon to give place to *concord*s and to *regularity*, till the whole be closed in a just and agreeable *cadence*, and leave behind it a sweet and a lasting remembrance. With this wholesome advice to all professors, and to all lovers of Music, (not forgetting myself amongst the latter,) I close my epistle, to which I would also set my name, if that were necessary. But your *Essay*, to speak without a compliment, stands not in need of my feeble aid and recommendation; and the *name* of your humble servant, which would be of so little use to you, and is of so little consequence, may as well slumber in silence and obscurity.

I am, &c.

POST-

P O S T S C R I P T.

AT the end of the Oxford edition of *Aratus*, &c. there are some learned observations on the Ancient Music, by *Chilmead*, and a few fragments of ancient tunes to some Greek odes and hymns, reduced to our modern *notation*.

It came into my mind that I had perused them long ago, and upon looking now into the book, I find two remarks of the editor, agreeing with my own notions; one, that the *time* of the musical notes answered to the *quantity* of the syllables; the other, that the Music of the Ancients was very plain and unadorned.

Probabilior eorum est opinio, qui dicunt toni seu vocis prolationem, syllabæ quantitatem semper sequi, &c.

Antiquæ musicæ summam, et (quod maxime mirum est) affectatam fuisse simplicitatem apparet ex senatus-consulto quodam laconico, &c.

A
R E P L Y

To the AUTHOR of

R E M A R K S

On the Essay on Musical Expression.

In a LETTER from Mr AVISON,
to his Friend in LONDON.

" If any Man either from MALICE, or for
" Ostentation of his owne Knowledge, or for Ig-
" norance do either HUGGER-MUGGER, or openly ca-
" lumniate that which either he understandeth not,
" or then maliciously wresteth to his own Sense,
" he as Augustus said by one who had spoken
" evil of him) Shall find that I have a Tongue also:
" and that ME REMORSURUM PETIT."

MORLEY's Introduction to MUSICKE.

First published in MDCCLIII.



R
I
the
retu
felf
my
I
fho
the
wri
fire
of
du
cal
pa
tat

A

R E P L Y, &c.

S I R,

I THANK you for the expedition with which you transmitted to me the remarks on my essay. I have, in return, sent you a short defence of myself against this virulent, though, I flatter myself, not formidable, antagonist.

If, after looking over these papers, you should think that they may serve to rectify the judgements of such persons as this writer may probably have misled, I desire you would send them to the press.

I must confess, from the advertisement of my remarker, I apprehended some undue severity; and, notwithstanding he called himself a gentleman, I had prepared myself for the worst. My expectation has, indeed, been fully answered:
instance

instead of the gentleman, the critic, the candid musician; his pamphlet has discovered him to be a vain, disappointed, snarling doctor^a of the science.

He begins, I think, with a pretty high-flown compliment upon the style of my Essay, and says, that it is writ in a language not unworthy of our best profewriters; nay, he adds also, that the person who drew up the Preface to my Concertos must be capable of giving sensible thoughts on other branches of Music^b. But why all this panegyric? only to introduce this very candid insinuation, that I am but the *nominal author* of both one and the other.

To reply to the man himself, or to offer to clear myself of this ridiculous

^a This (were other reasons wanting) may, I think, safely be concluded, from the pains he takes to make his readers understand that D stands for Doctor. See his Catalogue of *Antient English Musicians*. Rem. p. 52.

^b The writer of the *Remarks* is supposed to have alluded to the late Mr. Avison's ingenious friend Dr. Brown, author of the *Essays on Ld. Shaftsbury's Characteristics*.—The foregoing Letter concerning the *Music of the Ancients* was written by the learned Dr. Jortin.

charge, I think very much beneath me. But I will observe to *you*, that when I had determined to publish some thoughts on the subject of Music, by way of Preface to my last Concertos, I found my first design, of writing directions to performers only, grew so much upon my hands, that I could not resist the temptation, however unequal to the task, or extending them also to the practice of composition. Having thus attempted a province of writing which was new to me, I thought I could not engage in it with too much caution; and, therefore, had recourse to my learned friends, by whose advice I was induced to separate that part which related to the performance of full Music, and to publish the whole together afterwards, under the title of *An Essay on Musical Expression*; and am proud to embrace this opportunity of acknowledging the generous countenance which those gentlemen of integrity and genius shewed it. *So far*, our critic has wisely conjectured, it was the work of a *Junio*.

But

But to speak of the Essay itself. The plan it was formed upon was of a singular kind. It had nothing to do with the theoretic principles, and the mere mechanism of the science. Its aim was widely different. Intended, indeed, as a critical, but yet as a liberal, examen of this pleasing art; according to rules, not drawn from the formal schools of systematical professors, but from the school of nature and good sense.

You will easily perceive, that to the execution of such a plan, nothing was necessary but a good ear, and a taste cultivated by frequent hearing of Music. It was only writing on harmony, as many men, who never handled a pencil, have written upon colouring; and as many, who never penned a stanza, have written upon metre^b; and yet, in every age, writers

^b The ABBÉ DU BOS, whom the remarker has deigned to quote, on a matter that required some taste in Music, was unfortunately of this species of writers. Hear his character from VOLTAIRE'S *Siecle de Louis XIV.* "Tous les Artistes lisent avec fruit ses Reflexions sur la Poésie, la Peinture, et la
"Musique.

writers of this class may be found, whose works are held in as high esteem, as if they had been composed by the most able practical professors.

To give an instance or two (if our critic will pardon the learning of it); there is not, nor perhaps ever was, a single verse extant from the pen of LONGINUS; and yet his critical taste is as universally allowed, as that of HORACE himself. Though ARISTOTLE may justly be styled the father of criticism, and true judgement in poetry, yet he certainly did not excel in greatness or beauty of imagination, and had but a small share of the poetical spirit.

If then the genius of this sort of criticism is universally such, that, having taste, not practice, for its object, it is directed to *improve* the *manner*, not *teach* the *mechanism*, of any science; I see no reason why a critical enquirer into the merits of my essay, should think it

"Musique. Il ne savoit pourtant pas la Musique,
 "il n'avoit jamais pu faire de vers, et n'avoit pas
 "un Tableau. Mais il avoit beaucoup lu, vu, enten-
 "du, & reflechi."

N

his

his business first to examine the merits of my musical compositions. Admitting those compositions to be as bad as our Doctor would make them, I am then but in the case of those writers whom Mr *Pope* somewhere mentions :

“ Rules for good verse, they first with
“ pains recite ;

“ Then shew us what is bad by what they
“ write.”

But Mr *Pope* has said in another place,

“ Let such teach others who themselves
“ excel,

“ And censure freely who have written
“ well.”

This our sage remarker looked upon as an universal axiom, that would serve his purpose excellently, and accordingly planted it in his title-page, supposing that the poet thought none had a right to criticise, but such as were acknowledged to be good writers ; whereas, he meant by it only, that criticism, from an allowed artist, came with additional force and lustre ; and so undoubtedly it does. Yet,
to

to do my author justice, he presently runs from his text himself; for, in the very 4th page, he is of opinion, that a person would be best qualified to write upon this subject, who had not only *not written well*, but who had *not written at all*, provided only, that this person was a man of fortune, like his friend Sir *Humphrey Dash*. If you ask the reason, he will tell you, “that to be sure Sir Humphrey’s large estate would give a sanction, and perhaps command a deference to his opinion.” A very gentlemanly reflection truly!

But why must this rich Sir *Humphrey* be the only licensed critic? And why must a professor, *though even of the highest rank*, not be admitted? No, he will reply, by no means; “because, in some respect or other, the world will think him interested in it; and will very easily be persuaded, that whatever degree of esteem his *works* or *abilities* may stand in their opinion, yet, that in his own, they are placed much higher.”

Thus, it is evident, that his sole objection lay against the author of the essay, and not the essay itself; and had I not set my name to it, it is more than probable the public would not have been favoured with his curious remarks; and, for this reason chiefly, he has been instigated to level all his spleen against my character, as a composer: nor has he thought it sufficient to *vilify* the work he has *given me*, but he must *rob me of that* which he could not hope to *vilify*. An unparalleled favour indeed! and, no doubt, personally intended^c.

I think

^c There is a malevolence among some professors of the harmonic art, from which no distance of time or country can secure even the most deserving in their own profession. Their contemporaries they treat as rivals to their interest; and the works and characters of those that are gone before, they consider as obstructions to their fame.

We cannot otherwise account for that wilful ignorance, or affectation in some masters, who have been weak, or rather envious enough, to propagate a ridiculous notion, that CORELLI was indebted to another composer for the setting of his basses. Can any thing be imagined so absurd as this supposition? For the nature and method of musical composition is well known to be such, that, whoever this ex-

traor-

I think I have already reduced my antagonist's method of proceeding, to its first principles, *viz.* to personal pique and resentment; and have shewn, that had he succeeded in his malevolent attempt;—had he proved my compositions as execrable as *some* that have echoed through university theatres; had he done even this, it would scarce have affected the character of my essay.

I will now endeavour to shew, that the compositions themselves, are not quite so blameable as this musical Drawcanfir would make them.

His first critique, and, I think, his master-piece, contains many circumstantial, but false and virulent remarks on the first *allegro* of these concertos, to which he supposes I would give the name of *fugue*. Be it just what he pleases to call it. I shall not defend what the public is

traordinary coadjutor of CORELLI may have been, these shallow detamers might have spread their falsities much more consistently, had they attributed the construction of the whole to this wondrous unknown,

already in possession of; the public being the most proper judge. I shall only here observe, that our critic has wilfully, or ignorantly, confounded the terms *fugue* and *imitation*, which latter is by no means subject to the same laws with the former.

There are many irregular subjects which may often be introduced into musical compositions; and, when any of these are *imitated*, or *reversed*, a good ear will ascertain their *proper answers*, beyond any rules whatever: for the principles of harmony, which particularly direct the method of answering a complete and regular subject, would carry the answers of many others, of a subordinate kind, into an extraneous modulation. Therefore, such subjects ought only to be imitated; and the distances, in this case, are no otherwise to be considered, than as they may best agree with the *mode*, or *key*, in which they are employed, or that which is next to follow; neither is it necessary that their *intervals* should be confined to
any

any *stated progression*, or *order*, in their *melody*.

HAD I observed the method of answering the *accidental subjects* in this *allegro*, as laid down by our critic in his remarks, they must have produced most shocking effects; which, though this mechanic in Music, would, perhaps, have approved, yet better judges might, in reality, have imagined I had known no other art than that of the *spruzzarino* ^d.

Before I leave this part of my subject, I shall quote two authorities; the first of which, I make no doubt, our critic will acknowledge as authentic, since it comes from the same noble author, whose *Treatise on Harmony* he has himself, in his postscript, so particularly recommended to my perusal.

The second I shall venture to produce, without the advantage of so considerable a sanction; though, in the opinion of unprejudiced men, one of those happy spirits, whose parts and application will be

^d See Remarks, p. 5.

esteemed, in after-ages, an honour, not only to his country, but to the present *era* of that art, the progress of which he has so nobly assisted.

LORD ABERCORN, in his *Treatise on Harmony*, after several judicious remarks on the use of *solmisation*, in assisting the young composer how to ascertain the proper answers to any *regular fugue*, hath the following reflections on the species of *composition*, which is called *imitation*.

“ There are many other kinds of
 “ *composition*, which are often called
 “ *fugues*, though they are properly no
 “ more than *imitations* of *fugues*, for
 “ their *several parts* don't strictly pro-
 “ ceed by the *same species of intervals*.
 “ It would be endless to enumerate all the
 “ varieties of these *imitations*, which
 “ have been invented by the curious;
 “ wherefore, we shall only take notice of
 “ *two* sorts of them; the *first* of which
 “ is simply called *imitation*, and the *other*
 “ is called *fuga in nomine*.

“ A simple

" A simple *imitation* appears to the
 " eye like a *fugue*, its parts seeming to
 " proceed in the *same manner*, if we only
 " consider the *lines* and *spaces* on which
 " they are written. In *these*, the *answer*
 " may be made to follow the guide in
 " *any interval*; as, of a 2d, 3d, 4th, 5th,
 " 6th, 7th, &c. But as, in *all* these
 " cases, the several *parts* do not strictly
 " proceed by the *same intervals*, (the
 " *semitones* being placed differently in
 " *one part*, from what they are in *an-*
 " *other*) they are not properly to be
 " called *fugues*, but *imitations* only."

The other authority I shall bring from
 Mr RAMEAU's *Principles of Composition*,
 on the subject of design, imitation, &c.
 in Music,

" Design, in Music, is, in general, the
 " subject of all that the composer pro-
 " poses; for a skilful composer is to pro-
 " pose to himself, a movement, a key, or
 " mode, a melody, and an harmony,
 " agreeable to the subject he would treat.

* Lord Abercorn's *Treatise on Harmony*, p. 87.

" But

186 REPLY TO THE REMARKS

“ But this term is to be more particu-
 “ larly adapted to a certain melody, which
 “ he would have predominant in the con-
 “ tinuance of a piece, either for making
 “ it suitable and agreeable to the sense of
 “ the words, or for fancy or taste ; and,
 “ in that case, it is distinguished in de-
 “ sign, in imitation, and in fugue.

“ Imitation hath no particular merit
 “ that deserves our attention ; it consist-
 “ ing only by repeating, at pleasure, and
 “ in any of the parts, a certain continu-
 “ ance of melody, *without any other*
 “ *regularity.*

“ Fugue, as well as imitation, consists
 “ in a certain continuance of melody,
 “ which may be repeated at pleasure, and
 “ in any of the parts, *but with more cir-*
 “ *cumspection,* according to the following
 “ rules.

“ If, in imitation, we may repeat the
 “ melody of one or more bars, and even
 “ the air entirely in one, or in all the
 “ parts, *and upon whatever chords we*
 “ *think proper ;* on the contrary, in
 “ fugues,

“ fugues, the melody must alternatively
 “ be heard in the two principal parts,
 “ which are the treble and the bass, un-
 “ less, instead of the treble we chuse
 “ another part; and, if the piece contains
 “ many parts, it will be more perfect,
 “ when the fugue is heard alternatively
 “ in each part. Again, *the chords that*
 “ *must be therein used, do not depend upon*
 “ *our choice* ^f.”

Thus much may be sufficient to shew, that all our critic's depth of learning, on the subject of musical composition, must be of ancient date only, since the greatest of the moderns, both in *practice* and *theory*, have rendered quite obsolete many of those rigid laws, which only fetter the genius of those who would truly embellish their art.

By depriving the composer of the liberty of changing, or diversifying his subject, his piece, with frequent repetitions of the very same thought, would be extremely languid and tedious: whereas, if he re-

^f *Ramau's Principles of Composition*, p. 147.

lieves his first subject with others, and these are relative to their principal, in point of *air*; and, with regard to their *imitations*, are chiefly conducted by the rules of *modulation*; an allegro of this kind will have infinitely more spirit and variety, than either the lifeless *counterpoint*, or unmeaning *reverse* of throwing the air into one part only. What the composer hath chiefly to observe in this conduct betwixt the extremes, is, a special regard to the chusing those subjects only, which may naturally be connected, as well in their *modulation* as *harmony*, and are capable of preserving a similar air (or discourse, if the critic will admit) to the conclusion of his piece.

This method of introducing *the accidental subjects*, in a musical composition, may be handled like the like under-characters in a dramatic performance; which, though the poet intends not that they should ever eclipse his hero, or principal, he will nevertheless make natural and striking; and it often happens, that

though they are necessary to the support of his fable, they do but just appear, and no more is heard of them.

It is frequent, with the best composers of church-music, to introduce a new subject at every change of the words. An attempt of this nature, in the instrumental way, has given our critic much offence; which, I suppose, he has considered as too bold an innovation upon the good old laws of harmony: or did he think it an incroachment on the privilege of vocal Music, and that no other should presume to aim at sense, or the expression of any affection of the mind?

In his reflections, on the method of introducing the tenor, he makes a strange pothor about Music in four parts; when, in fact, there is no such thing. The *discords*, it is true, will admit of four parts; but, as the ear cannot rest on these alone, therefore, in every composition, they must have their *preparations* and *resolutions* by *concord*s, which, on that account, will have the greatest share in the construction
of

of the harmony; otherwise, it cannot be called Music: hence then, as it is impossible to find any *concord*, that can admit of more than three different notes; so, strictly speaking, there can be but three parts in any musical composition, since whatever number may be added to these, they are no more than either *unisons* or *slaves* to their principals.

I shall here take occasion to observe, by way of information to my critic, that notwithstanding a piece of Music is composed in four parts, yet it does not follow that every *chord*, or every *accented part* of the harmony, should, therefore, have *four notes*, or even *three* in many cases. This kind of fullness is not always required, because it often happens, that the *tenor*, or any other *part*, being either an *octave* or *unison* with the *bass*, or with *each other*, will produce a more pleasing effect than when *otherwise accompanied*.

On this score, however, our critic has arraigned the taste of MARCELLO, as forming his *choruses* upon the unisons of the *solo*,
or

or *principal parts*; and thence prefers, on all occasions, the harmonical compositions of *four parts*; not reflecting on those reasons which the sensible composer may assign for exerting his genius in *either* of these methods; and which MARCELLO very happily has distinguished, in the prodigious variety of movements that are in the work of his Psalms. But this purblind critic, though he owns his intimacy with them all, could only see those which he thought he might abuse, and abuse merely because they were contrary to his groveling taste.

What offers next, is the wonderful stress he has laid on some trifling disallowances: — a mean kind of critique on the art of Music; as these are errors which may escape the most painful corrections, and may be found in the works of the most accurate composers. I had almost said, it is more than probable our critic may find them in his own.

“ Unfinish’d things, one knows not what to call,
 “ Their generation’s so equivocal.”

It

It were, therefore, impossible to retaliate his friendly advice, by any minute survey of such unmeaning attempts in composition. Perhaps too it might prove an unnecessary task, having already sufficiently described them in the chapter on modulation; from which he has transcribed an entire paragraph, with such sensibility of resentment, as makes me suspect he was conscious of somewhat he could not bear.

In return for this mortification, it seems as if he had vowed revenge, and had determined not to allow me, even the very first principles of thorough bass. But, in the fury of his charge, he hath disarmed himself; for, he either does not know, or, at least, is unwilling to acknowledge, that there are many liberties allowable in musical composition, as well as in other arts: and especially, in many cases, that two, or more, perfect chords of the same kind, may not only be dispensed with for the sake of some remarkable air or expression in any *one part*, but that they may even

* See Essay, p. 33. and Remarks, p. 37.

be produced to give a very pleasing effect from *many parts* together.

The method of initiating pupils in Music, into a thorough knowledge of the rules of *accompaniment*, and the various *preparations* and *resolutions* of *discords*, is necessary to explain what is proper to be done in this branch of art; yet it is not sufficient to shew him *all* that may be done. *Nature* is still superior to *art*: and, as the first principles of all science were primarily deduced from nature, and have been brought, by slow degrees, to their present perfection; so, we may naturally conclude, these improvements may yet be carried higher.

In Music, there are express laws relating to *modulation*, as well as to *harmony*; yet, if all composers indiscriminately were confined to these laws, we should soon see an end of all taste, spirit, and variety in their compositions: and I don't know whether, by this means, we should not be deprived of one of the strongest efforts of
O
genius,

genius, viz. *that of nobly over-leaping the too narrow bounds of human art*^h.

To evince the truth of this, if it were necessary, I could point out instances to our critic, in the works of many eminent composers; though not, perhaps, in the meagre productions of those *Veterans*, a list of whom he has given us in his remarks, who, it seems, were such a set of *desperados*, in their way, that they sooner would have "*spurned against the image of a saint, than have taken two perfect chords of one kind together.*"

But to return to my *A. B. C.* critic.

To do him all possible honour, we must allow him to know which are false accompaniments in Music, as *Bunyan* or

^h Some beauties yet no precepts can declare
For there's a happiness as well as care.

Music resembles poetry; in each

Are nameless graces which no methods teach,
And which a master-hand alone can reach.

If, where the rules not far enough extend,

(Since rules were made but to promote their end)

Some lucky licence answers to the full

'Tis intent propos'd, that licence is a rule.

ESSAY ON CRITICISM.

Quarles

Quarles may have understood what was false grammar in writing : and, in that case, it is but justice to own he has pointed out some faults ; but such as his singular good-nature would not suffer him to perceive might be faults of the engraver, or such as might easily escape the notice of the composer.

To instance one of this kind will be sufficient. In his first example, he has discovered a *tritone* in the tenor, and loudly exclaimed against the enormity of such a blunder. Whereas, had truth, in reality, been his aim, he might have naturally supposed, that the engraver had only omitted a *sharp*, the placing of which, would have removed all his mighty cause of clamour against the falseness of that *relation*¹.

But is it not obvious to every one, how little conversant soever in the composition

¹ Pains, reading, study, are their just pretence,
And all they want is spirit, taste, and sense ;
Commas and points they set exactly right,
And 'twere a sin to rob them of their mite.

EPISTLE TO DR. ARBUTHNOT.

of Music, that among such a multiplicity of business, which is necessary in the construction of harmony, some things may be over-seen, some little characters omitted (though of signal consequence in the work), in spite of every endeavour to prevent such mistakes? But those who are only moved with the implacable spirit of ill-nature, will always either find or invent topics to gratify their malevolent tempers.—Of this happy class, we may rank our masked annotator, whose determined censures are, but too glaringly, the ebullitions of a mortified and splenetic humour ^k.

But

^k THOMAS MORLEY (from whom our critic has drawn his musical learning, and produced, in his remarks, that collection of the old *English* composers, whose names he suspects to have ever come to my knowledge) this venerable author himself, was not exempt from this tax of censure, or calumny rather, for writing an useful book, and presuming to distinguish himself among his brethren. Here are his very words :
 “ But seeing in these latter daies and dotting age of
 “ the world, there is nothing more subject to calum-
 “ nie and backbiting then that which is most true
 “ and right; and that, as there be many who will
 “ enter into the reading my booke for their instruc-
 “ tion, so, I doubt not, but diverse also will reade
 “ it;

But to proceed with *his* Remarks.—
 In the above first example, the two instances of a *ninth* being prepared in the *eighth*, is a false charge; because he supposes the last and passing note in the bass to give that *preparation*; whereas, it is prepared in the *accented note* of the *division*, which is a *fifth*, and, therefore, an allowable *preparation*: this he might easily have perceived, had he reduced that *division* in the *bass*, to its *fundamental*, or *accented harmony*.

The false *resolution*, which he has deigned to correct, is this: “The discord
 “improperly *resolved*, is in the last bar,
 “between the bass and the alto; where
 “B is tied as a *ninth* to A, but instead of
 “resolving it into the eighth, according

“it, not so much for any pleasure or profit they looke
 “for in it, as to find something whereat to repine, or
 “take occasion of backbiting; such men I sweare, that
 “if in friendship they will (either publicly or pri-
 “vately) make mee acquainted with any thing in the
 “booke, which either they like not, or understand not:
 “I will not onely be content to give them a reason
 “(and if I cannot, to turn to their opinion) but also
 “thinke my self highly beholding to them.”

* Preface to *Morley's* Introduction to Musicke.

“ to the rule, it rises to the third, directly
 “ contrary to it.”—“ How easy to have
 “ made it otherwise, I need not prove—;
 “ however, the directs shew it very clear-
 “ ly.”—Shew what?—That our doctor
 is not quite so wise as he thought himself :
 for this very direct would occasion *two*
eighths between the *alto* and the *second*
violin :—a fault, which, on all occasions,
 he is very highly offended with ! Besides,
 I must here acquaint him, that the reso-
 lution of the *ninth* into the *third*, and
third minor especially, is by no means
 against the rule, because it is agreeable to
 the ear : and, furthermore, Lord ABER-
 CORN saith ; “ the *ninth* is resolved in
 “ a *third*, a *sixth*, or an *eighth*, from
 “ every one of the concords it is prepared
 “ in, &c.” And, if the example from
 his favourite Doctor CROFTS will not
 convince him, I doubt he must erase the
 Doctor’s name from the list of his chaste
English worthies ; for I could direct my
 critic, in the anthems of this author, to
 many

many examples of a like kind with the *two* here annexed.

As to the errors of two *perfect chords* of the same kind, I will confess to him, that I am so hardened a sinner, on certain occasions, against *his* John-Trott laws, that I have more than once intentionally offended; and if he cannot perceive the reason, it will scarce be worth while to inform him.

It may not be amiss to offer the following remark, on the whole of this example.—The modulation in a *flat key*, it is well known, is very different from *that* in the *sharp key*; the *former* being the same, whether you ascend or descend; whereas, if you ascend in the *latter*, the *sixth* must be *sharp*, though it is *flat* in descending: hence, the *false fifth*, and even the *tritone*, cannot always be avoided. It is, therefore, to this imperfection in the *scale of Music*, you must impute the *C sharp* in the *tenor*, and the omission of not figuring *that sharp* in the *bass*.—And this is the cause of our critic's assigning,

to the above example, the worst singing he ever heard. Nevertheless, these false relations are allowable in *quick movements*, and may be found in the very best compositions: but in *slow movements*, where they can neither be *accented*, nor even made *passing notes*, they are extremely disagreeable; and it seems, indeed, as if our critic had treated this dissonant *tritone* in a very solemn way, having, no doubt, tried and re-tried it upon his harpsichord, till dwelling on the discord might sufficiently raise his spleen for the business he had undertaken¹.

¹ N^o 1. To this first example in notes, is added another bass, to shew the *accented* harmony in that part; by which it evidently appears, that the *last* note in the division, or supposed bass, hath no sort of *accompaniment* in any of the parts, and, therefore, cannot possibly be included in the general harmony. How then can this *unaccented*, *unaccompanied*, and *swift-passing note* be supposed to prepare the *discord*? Then judge, ye candid composers, whether this caviling critic might not blush at so unfair a charge, did he not wear a mask to hide his shame?

The two *perfect fifths* in the tenor, are obviated by removing *one note*, and the *tritone* by adding a *sharp*.

For the other example, which shews the *ninth* resolved in a *third*, see CROFTS'S *Anthems*, vol. i. p. 86. Ps. vi. and 41 bar.

Example

Example the second, contains a very curious remark on the passion intended to be there expressed.—“It is, seemingly, “like the *whimpering* and *whining* of a “boy, who dreads a flogging, and goes “unwillingly to school, &c.”—But he has done me an honour in this place, which he did not intend; for, as I have always thought, that the passions might be very powerfully expressed, as well by instrumental Music, as by vocal; therefore, in my little attempts that way, I have generally aimed at some peculiar expression. But, it seems, our critic has had correction so much in his head, that he could not conceive how the *plaintive style* could be otherwise described. Or, perhaps, he formed his judgement of this passage, from his own manual execution of it; and then, indeed, I will not dispute with him, but it might *whine* and *whimper*, just in the manner he describes it.

The close of his paragraph, on this head, may be quoted as a sample of his prodigious sagacity in making discoveries.

“I shall

202 REPLY TO THE REMARKS

“ I shall only add, that if the passages had
 “ been less delicate, the imitations more
 “ just, and the harmony in the *tutti*
 “ more *perfect* and *complete*, it would
 “ have been infinitely better Music.”—
 Or, in other words, if *every part* had
 been good, *the whole* had been better.—
 A most notable conclusion ^m!

Example the third, where the *ninth*
 is prepared in the *eighth*, I acknowledge,
 is so far an oversight, as, strictly speaking,
 it offends against an established rule; and,
 therefore, I should have thought myself
 obliged to him for his remark, had he
 corrected with candor. If that had been
 the case, he might have supposed this
 rule was dispensed with, for the sake of
 the *subject* which is heard in the two
 principal parts; and to which that pas-
 sage in the second violin, wherein is con-
 tained the disallowance, is only an accom-

^m No 2. Contains the whipping piece, but is here
 omitted, being only a matter of taste between the
 critic and his author: and, perhaps too, it might
 rather seem cruel to produce the rod again, “how-
 “ ever gracefully it may be brandished.” Rem. p. 37.

panyment,

Nº 3

1st Ex.

F *

2^d Ex.

ombra cara di mia sposa deh riposa lieta as -

8 9 8

*

3^d Ex.

neither

thy dis - pleasure

pleasure neither chaf - ten

me in thy dis -

*

panymment, and there intended not to overpower the effect of the fugue; and also to preserve a similar *air*, or movement with the upper part. However, as these, and many other liberties, are frequently taken by the greatest composers, I shall produce only one, from that deservedly admired song, *Ombra cara*, in Mr. HANDEL's Opera of *Rhadamistus*: this, you may remember, is a very *slow* movement; whereas, in the instance which our critic has noted, the movement is *rapid*, and, consequently, any disagreeable effect that might otherwise be found from the disallowance, is here lost in the flight of its progressⁿ.

ⁿ N^o 3. The minum G, in the last bar, is F in the concertos, which, no doubt, is the same also in our critic's manuscript: this circumstance, trifling as it is, may serve to convince him that *printers* may commit errors in a *large work*, as well as in a *small one*.

In the third bar of the second example, the *ninth* is prepared in the *eighth*, which is the *accented* note.

The third of these examples, where the *ninth* is prepared in the *eighth*, is taken from a full anthem of Doctor CROFTS's, vol. i. p. 80. Pl. vi. and 21st bar.

The

The fourth example contains a criticism, as strange as he hath represented the fault to be. His question is,—“ Pray
 “ in what part is the discord? I doubt
 “ not but your answer will be, Where the
 “ binding is.”—And where else can it be placed? And thus he proceeds,—“ Why
 “ then are the figures 7 and 9 put there?
 “ For they manifestly make the upper
 “ parts discords; but then, why are they
 “ not *resolved*? if the bass be a discord, the
 “ second maketh it so; and the seventh
 “ most certainly is a false accompany-
 “ ment.”—To all this I answer, that the
 7 and 9 are placed there, because the bass
 stands still. For, when the parts are
 driving each other, and the bass keeps
 its note, the accompaniments, on that
 account, must often be *extraneous*; and,
 where the *tasto-solo*, or striking of one
 key, is not directed, the holding note
 should be always completely figured:
 and thence the 7 and 9 may frequently
 be found together. In this case, every
discord, out of the common rule of *figu-*

rate-descant, may be considered as a kind of *appoggiatura*, or leaning note, where the *discord* is often strongly expressed, and the succeeding *concord* but just dropped upon the ear. But this is an innovation against the venerable fathers of harmony, and brought in by the *Italians*; I am not, therefore, surprized, that our orthodox critic hath exclaimed so violently against it.

But there is another circumstance attending this example, which our critic was not aware of; and, with all his amazement at the strangeness of this passage, he has shewn, if possible, more folly than ill-nature. If he does not know, that the work of *melody* may also be exerted, and most happily too, in the *basses* of musical composition, I will refer him to the *operas* of RAMEAU, where he will find these *appoggiaturas*, and a certain melody, in the bass, (peculiar, as yet, indeed, to this composer) giving the finest effects that can possibly be imagined.

As

As to his remark on the thinness of the *tenor* in this example, he may recollect what I have said in my directions to performers, at the head of these concertos, where it is expressly mentioned, with the reasons there assigned, why the *tenor* is intended throughout the whole of that work, as an auxiliary, rather than as a separate part °.

In the fifth example, he has manifestly over-looked a superior design, which, at all events, he would sacrifice to a slavish regard of very minute disallowances; and as he hath particularly challenged, in this place, my audacious attempts, both as

° No 4. *First* example shews the *appoggiatura* in the bass, being the cause of our critic's amazement, and blundering in this place.

The *second* shews the harmony independent of the *appoggiatura*: and in the *third*, the two *principal* parts are inverted, which proves the harmony to be just.

You will observe, that in the second and third examples, there is added a new *tenor*. The reason is this. The *melody* of this passage in the *bass*, being, in a great measure, taken away, a *fuller harmony* is substituted, as there is no particular *air* which it may *over-power*: whereas, in the first example, the *tenor* is unison with the *bass*, to enforce the expression of the *appoggiatura*, or *melody* in that part.

a com-

P(28)206

Nº 4

1.st Ex.



Appoggiatura

2.^d Ex



3.^d Ex



a composer and critic, he must pardon
 me, if, therefore, I dispute his own pre-
 tensions in this case. His allegation is
 this.—“Suppose the question were put
 “to a young practitioner in thorough-
 “bass, What are the proper consequents
 “of G *sharp* in the bass, with a *seventh*
 “figured to it? Would not his answer
 “be, The G *sharp* is a plain indication,
 “that A should be the following note;
 “and the *seventh*, which is F *natural*,
 “will expect to find its *resolution* in E
 “*natural*?”—To this, I need only ob-
 serve, that as the question is put to a
 learner, so the answer is such as a
 learner only could give. But if he had
 put the same question to a master, he
 would have shewn him, that these *resolu-*
tions may be varied many ways; and that
 otherwise it would be a vain attempt in
 the composer to produce variety in his
 work, seeing every novice might before-
 hand suggest, when any particular chord
 was struck, what next was to follow.

In

208 REPLY TO THE REMARKS

In this example, our remarker hath roundly asserted, that the *allegro* preceding the *adagio*, N° 5, is concluded with a *full cadence* in D with its *sharp third*, in order, no doubt, to shew the bad effect of the succeeding modulation into a *flat key*. But this is not fact, the *allegro* being closed in the *fifth* of the key, and therefore an *imperfect cadence*: which, like the *colon* in writing, leaves the ear in expectation of something to follow; and, with regard to a musical composition, the modulation, in that case, may deviate with greater freedom from the common rule P.

The

P N° 5. The *imperfect cadence*, which forms the close of the *allegro*, is here annexed, to shew that our critic misinformed his friend, when he said this *allegro* was concluded by a *full cadence*.

N° 6. and 7. convey nothing, so it was thought needless to produce them here again.

Thus, by the appearance of these maimed examples in notes, (designed, no doubt, by such *scraps*, to catch the eye, and exclude the ear) our notable projector imagined, he had fairly submitted his *reasonable* critique to the judgement of the public: but, may not we too imagine in our turn, that, as the principles of composition are obvious but to few, he trusted

The remaining examples, 6 and 7, make an excellent close to his critical remarks: for, whatever errors they are intended to shew; no person, unacquainted with the movement from whence they are taken, can form any just notion about them. If they are designed as specimens of the composer's contrivance, the critic has, indeed, acted consistently to the last; because, if in these, and his other examples, he had produced the several pieces entire, to which they belong, this ingenuous method might not so well have answered his determined purpose of censure. Perhaps, he was aware of this; for, notwithstanding he hath assured his friend, that he had not scored *all* the *concertos*, we are not sworn to believe him; nor can I otherwise infer, from the nature of his

trusted the *multitude* would not see into his flimsy objections. I have, therefore, thought it worth while, not only to clear myself of the injustice he would have done me, had it been in his power, but also to shew the imposition he would lay on the art of Music itself, by exposing his narrow and unexperienced notions in composition:

P

Remarks,

Remarks, but that his sole intention was, a seeking of errors; I shall, therefore, leave him with this frank confession, which I have borrowed from *EPICETUS*, (which he may also call an *affetation of learning*, if he pleases) that if he were as intimate with the faults of these *concertos*, as I am, he would find a great many more.

Thus I have gone regularly through all the objections which this doughty antagonist has been pleased to raise against these *concertos*. But I fancy I shall be easily excused from taking the same pains with his coarse and wordy comment on the Essay itself, in which, like a true polemic, he has laid down but one rule or principle of writing, namely, to oppose, at all events, whatever I had advanced, and to pervert every plain passage, which, even so perverted, he had not talents to confute.

To give one instance.—The heat of his rage seems to be kindled at the affront which he would insinuate I have put upon the *English* composers. And to
draw

draw their severest resentment upon me, he hath also as falsely insinuated that I have equally injured the great original which they have imitated.

Then he produces the following passage.—“The *Italians* seem particularly indebted to the variety and invention of SCARLATTI; and *France* has produced a RAMEAU, equal, if not superior, to LULLY. The *English*, as yet, indeed, have not been so successful: but whether this may be owing to any inferiority in the original they have chose to imitate, or to a want of genius, in those that are his imitators (in distinguishing, perhaps, not the most excellent of his works) it is not necessary here to determine.”—This he calls a saucy insinuation. But saucy to whom? If to his Doctorship only, I am entirely unconcerned about it. But if to Mr. HANDEL, I would be the first to condemn it, and erase it from my Essay: this, however, I believe, none but our

^a See Essay, p. 48.

212 REPLY TO THE REMARKS

critic will suspect; though every one will easily perceive his reason for quoting and perverting it, *viz.* to take off the odium from such meagre composers as himself, and to throw it all upon the character of Mr. HANDEL.

I could wish to know whence this unnatural conjunction comes, and what Mr. HANDEL has done, that he deserves to be treated with that air of familiarity which our author puts on, when he calls him his ^r brother.—*Poor Doctor!* I know not what tables of affinity or consanguinity can prove you even his cousin-german. Is Mr. HANDEL an *Englishman*? is his very name *English*? was his education *English*? was he not first educated in the *Italian* school? did he not compose and direct the *Italian* operas here many years? It is true, he has since deigned to strengthen the delicacy of the *Italian* air, so as to bear the rougher accent of our language. But to call him, on that account, brother to such com-

^r See the Remarks, p. 62.

posers

posers as our *Doctor*, I am persuaded, is an appellation, that he would reject with the contempt it deserves.

With respect to my countrymen, I thought I had shewn a very high regard to their genius and abilities, when I endeavoured to prove, that, by an unprejudiced intercourse with the world in general, and by a right application of their own natural good sense, the *English* might undoubtedly receive, and *improve* those advantages, which other nations had experienced from a like conduct; and, without which, no distinct people of themselves, and no professors in any art whatever, can expect to excel.

Nevertheless, our sanguine critic has treated this impartiality, as relinquishing the merits of my own countrymen; nor will he be satisfied with any thing less than a plenary acknowledgement, that they are not only superior to all other nations, in their musical abilities, but, in all former times, have deserved the same pre-eminence.—Such a position must surely
 • seem

214 REPLY TO THE REMARKS

seem false, and highly absurd to all judges, who esteem it a virtue to be *national*, but not to be *bigoted*.

But it is the indelible stamp of mean and trifling spirits, to envy and depreciate the talents of those whom they vainly strive to rival.—To this we may justly impute the false odium which some have endeavoured to throw on this nation, as an encourager of foreign artists.—Can any thing redound more to its real glory? does not this generous regard to merit, of whatever country, spread the name and genius of the *English* to the most distant climes, and render them an honour to human nature?

With regard to Music, had we been left to ourselves, without the least intercourse with other nations, it is hard to say what might have been the reigning taste. If we may judge from the high claims of those professors, who contemptuously reject all foreign improvements, I am afraid we should have had no great cause to boast of any superior excellence.

Y
this
but
CINI
been
reign
fical
right
fore-
T
I app
him a
of th
marke
" pro
" p.
" for
" M
" har
" the
" wo
" tra
" BL
" cha
" BL
" ger
" to
" tim
" she
" and
" wel

Yet, perhaps, I may be mistaken; had this been the case, it is not improbable but (as the names of HANDEL, BONONCINI, GEMINIANI, &c. had then never been heard of) our Doctor would have reigned, at present, supreme over our musical kingdom, and proved his hereditary right by a lineal descent from his *great fore-father* Doctor BULL^s.

Having

^s The following extract from the *Fasts Oxon.* will, I apprehend, entertain the reader; as at once giving him a character of this *famous Doctor*, and an idea of the taste of that sort of Music, which our remarker so highly applauds. "JOHN BULL, (that "prodigy of a man, see Remarks on the Essay, "p. 54.) who had practised the faculty of Music "for 14 years, was then admitted bachelor of "Music.—This person, who had a most prodigious "hand on the organ, and was famous throughout "the religious world, for his church Music, (the "words of some of which are extant) had been "trained up under an excellent master, named "BLITHMAN, organist of queen ELIZABETH's "chapel, who died much lamented in 1591. This "BLITHMAN, perceiving that he had a natural "geny to the faculty, spared neither time nor labour "to advance it to the utmost. So that, in short "time, he being more than master of it, which he "shewed by his most admirable compositions, played "and sung in many churches beyond the seas, as "well as at home, he took occasion to go *incognito* "into

216 REPLY TO THE REMARKS.

Having placed our Doctor on his

“into *France* and *Germany*. At length, hearing of
 “a famous musician, belonging to a certain cathed-
 “dral, (at *St. Omer's*, as I have heard) he applied
 “himself as a novice to him, to learn something of
 “his faculty, and to see and admire his works. This
 “musician, after some discourse had passed between
 “them, conducted *BULL* to a *vestry*, or Music school,
 “joining to the cathedral, and shewed to him a
 “*lesson* or *song* of *forty parts*, and then made a vaunt-
 “ing challenge to any person in the world to add
 “one more part to them, supposing it to be so com-
 “pleat and full, that it was impossible for any mortal
 “to correct, or add to it. *BULL*, thereupon, de-
 “siring the use of ink and ruled paper, (such as
 “we call musical paper) prayed the musician to lock
 “him up in the said school for 2 or 3 hours; which
 “being done, not without great disdain by the
 “musician, *BULL*, in that time, or less, added *forty*
 “*more parts* to the said *lesson* or *song*. The musician,
 “thereupon, being called in, he viewed it, tried
 “it, and re-tried it. At length he burst out into a
 “great ecstasy, and swore by the great God, that he
 “*that added those forty parts, must either be the devil,*
 “*or Dr. Bull, &c.*”—But, which of these eminent
 personages had the greatest share in this wonderful
 performance, we are not able to determine, seeing
 it hath perished in the wreck of time, from which,
 not even all its fourscore parts could defend it.
 Nevertheless, the fame of these great musical deeds
 hath lived in the records of *Parnassus*; and, no doubt
 but our critic, by his vicinity to that happy mansion,
 hath already in view, the distant eminence of being
 enrolled among those chiefs who have done such
 wonders.

throne

throne in this ideal kingdom, I very respectfully take my leave of him.— But, in a sentence or two more, I will beg leave to deliver my sentiments of Mr. HANDEL, which, I am sure, will contradict nothing I have said in my Essay; and, I flatter myself, will be assented to by the *rational* part of our musical judges.

Mr. HANDEL is, in Music, what his own DRYDEN was in poetry; nervous, exalted, and harmonious; but voluminous, and, consequently, not always correct. Their abilities equal to every thing; their execution frequently inferior. Born with genius capable of *soaring the boldest flights*; they have sometimes, to suit the vitiated taste of the age they lived in, *descended to the lowest*. Yet, as both their excellencies are infinitely more numerous than their deficiencies, so both their characters will devolve to latest posterity, not as models of perfection, yet glorious examples of those

Q

amazing

218 REPLY TO THE REMARKS, &c.
amazing powers that actuate the human
soul.

I am,

S I R,

Your most humble servant,

Newcastle,
Feb. 22, 1753.

CHARLES AVISON,
2 JY 58

POST-

P O S T S C R I P T.

I Shall here give the remark of a friend.

“ You have spoken of *Aristotle*, p. 177.
 “ as of one who did not hold an eminent
 “ rank amongst the sons of *Apollo*, but
 “ played a sort of *second repieus* in that
 “ concert. I am somewhat afraid, lest
 “ you should offend certain *Academics*,
 “ who, upon this occasion, may let fly at
 “ you a syllogism in *Barbara*, or *Bocardo*,
 “ and attack you with *authorities*. I
 “ would therefore advise you to add, that
 “ *Cicero* and *Quintilian* represent *Aristotle*
 “ as one of the most ingenious, elegant,
 “ and polite writers; which affords a fa-
 “ vourable presumption, that his verses
 “ cannot be bad; and yet, on the other
 “ hand, who more eloquent than *Cicero*,
 “ whose verses are certainly of the fa-
 “ mily of the *Mediocres*? It is also to be

" observed, that this philosopher exercised
 " his talents in the poetic way, com-
 " posed a *scholium*, or hymn, some dis-
 " tichs, &c. and is commended, as a
 " good poet, by *Julius Scaliger*, *Daniel*
 " *Heinsius*, and *Rapin*. The first of these
 " critics went so far as to affirm, that he
 " was in no respect inferior to *Pindar*.
 " But for thir partial determination of
 " *Scaliger*, when he went to the *Elysian*
 " fields,

" *The Lyrics all against him rose,*

" *And Pindar pull'd him by the nose.*

" Let us then rather be favourable,
 " than severe in our judgement upon this
 " great genius, and leave his *poetical*
 " *merits* ambiguous, till they be decided
 " by your *antagonist*, when he shall find
 " himself able and willing to settle this
 " *counter-point*, and to discuss the *pro*
 " *and the con.*"

You may thus read, in p. 177.

Though *Aristotle* may justly be styled
 the father of criticism and true judge-
 ment

P O S T S C R I P T. 221

ment in poetry, and though he was himself a composer of verses, yet he holds not the same rank amongst the poets as amongst the critics.

F I N I S.

POST OFFICE

and though he was him
let a copy of the
net the same rank amongst the poets as
amongst the writers

2 JY 58

L.
rev
aff
oth
an
"
"
"
"
"
"
"
"
"

Ita
Pri

Lo

Pri

V
and
rup

BOOKS printed for LOCKYER DAVIS.

I. **M**AXIMS and Moral Reflexions, by the Duke de la Rochefoucault. A new Edition revised and improved. Price 3 s. M. de Voltaire affirms, that these Maxims contributed more than any other work, to form the taste of the French Nation; and that they are known by heart. "Till you come to know Mankind," says Lord Chesterfield, "I know nothing that can bring you so well acquainted with them, as the Duc de la Rochefoucault's Maxims; which I would advise you to look into for some moments at least, every day of your life."

II. An Essay on Painting, written originally in Italian, by Count Algarotti. F. R. S. F. S. A. Price 3 s.

III. Algarotti's Essay on the Opera. Price 3 s.

IV. Dr. Brown's Essays on the Characteristics of Lord Shaftsbury. 5th Edition. Price 5 s.

V. Dr. Brown's Sermons. Price 5 s.

VI. Dr. Brown's Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times, 2 vols. Price 8 s.

VII. Dr. Brown's Dissertation on Poetry. Price 4 s.

VIII. Dr. Brown's Dissertation on the Rise, Union, and Power, the Progressions, Separations, and Corruptions, of Poetry and Music, 4to.

IX. Dr.

BOOKS printed for LOCKYER DAVIS.

IX. Dr. Brown's Thoughts on Civil Liberty,
Licentiousness, and Faction. Price 2 s. 6 d.

X. The Life and Letters of the celebrated Madame
de Maintenon, 3 vols. Price 9 s.

XI. A Method of making useful Mineral Col-
lections, by Mr. Meyer. Price 1 s. 6 d.